AFL-CIO NEWS

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Janitors around the country are pressuring employers to clean up their act. **See story, Page 5.**

Political activities to highlight busy '96

By Michael Byrne

The AFL-CIO will take the case of declining worker buying power directly to the people during the 1996 political season, using a series of regional hearings to demand that candidates address how they will "give America a raise," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

"We'll take our show on the road," Sweeney told reporters at the National Press Club. "(We'll) put the issue of wages at the center of political debate."

The grass-roots campaign will shadow presidential candidates as they campaign in Iowa for the Feb. 12 caucus, in New Hampshire for the Feb. 24 primary, and in other states as the national media follows the political drumbeat across the country, Sweeney said. **(See speech excerpts, Page 2).**

On Jan. 25, the federation's General Board will meet in Washington to consider endorsing candidates for president and vice president. If President Clinton and Vice President Gore receive the AFL-CIO's endorsement, as they did after the party conventions in 1992, it will be the first time that labor has been united going into the primary season since Walter Mondale was backed in 1984.

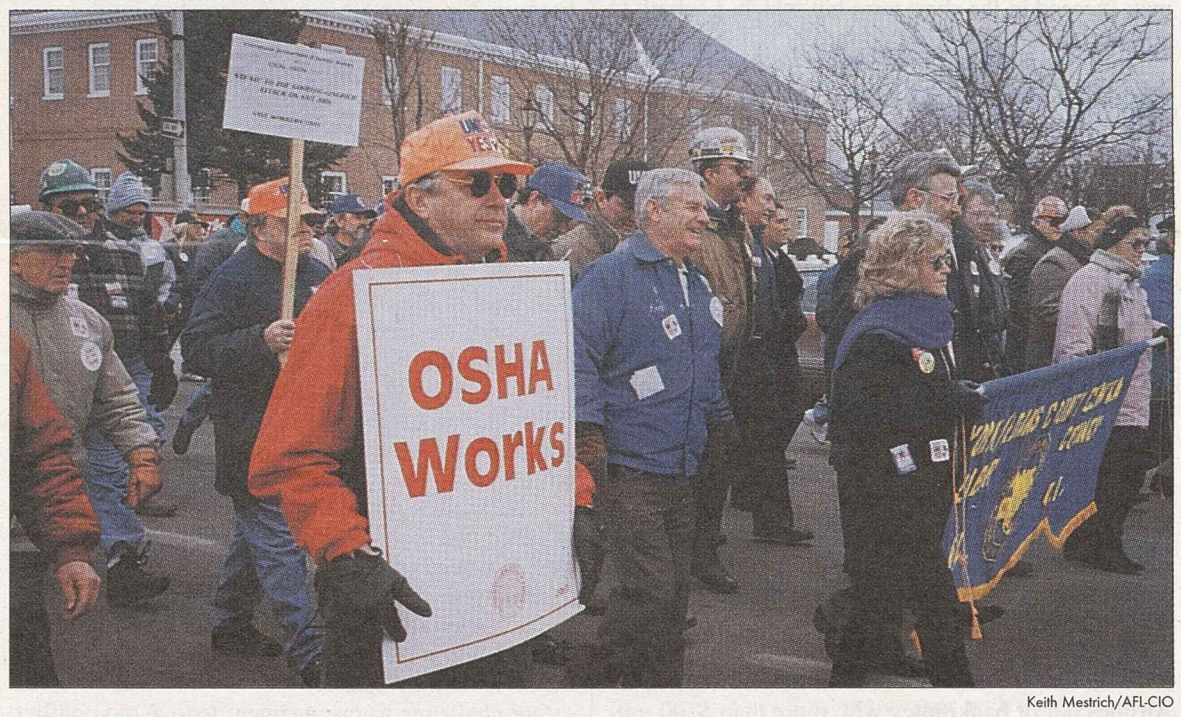
But the federation also has its eye on a more immediate political goal, a special election in Oregon to fill the Senate vacancy left by the resignation of Republican Bob Packwood. AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal said that race could set the tone of the political season much the way that Harris Wofford's victory in the Pennsylvania special election in 1991 paved the way for the ouster of President Bush.

The Oregon AFL-CIO has endorsed Democrat Ron Wyden (87 percent COPE voting record), who narrowly defeated Peter DeFazio in the primary, to challenge Republican businessman and state Sen. Gordon Smith. Both the primary and the general election are being conducted by mail balloting, which boosted voter participation in the primary to 60 percent, compared with just over 43.3 percent voting in state primaries last year.

The ballots are going out to voters on Jan. 10 and are due back by Jan. 30. The AFL-CIO and affiliated unions have more than 25 activists working full time on the campaign.

"We're mailing endorsement pieces to 75,000 union members and persuasion pieces to an estimated

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Keith Mestrich/AFL-CIO

Nearly 500 OSHA supporters marched to Rep. William F. Goodling's office in York, Pa., on Dec. 28 to urge the lawmaker not to support agency-bashing legislation. Among those leading the march were Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President Bill George and York Adams County Central Labor Council President Dick Boyd. **See story, Page 3.**

Key union issues remain on agenda for GOP Congress

By Mike Hall

Although organized labor, congressional Democrats and the White House were able to stall much of the Republican majority's "Contract on America" last year, many important issues for working families remain to be settled in the upcoming session of Congress.

Both houses are expected to act on bills that would gut the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and workplace safety laws. The Senate also is expected to vote on the so-called TEAM Act, which, in effect, would allow the creation of "company unions." The bill passed the House in 1995.

A Senate bill would allow employers to ask employees to work 160 hours over a four-week period before they would be eligible for overtime. Unions argue employees could be told to work 20 straight eight-hour days before seeing a penny of overtime, or 70 hours one week, 50 the next and 40 a third. The bill's opponents point out that such overwork could lead to more injuries and decreased productivity.

While supposedly voluntary, the bill carries no penalties for employers who coerce workers into these longer hours. Workers without union contracts will feel compelled to work the hours the boss asks.

Legislation to raise the minimum wage by 90 cents an hour over a two-year period may reach the Senate floor, as Democrats look for other bills on which to attach the increase. Many Republicans have spoken out strongly against a raise, and Majority Leader Richard K. Armey (R-Texas) even said the law should be repealed.

The issue of welfare reform will be revisited after President Clinton makes his promised veto of legislation recently sent to him that would allow the displacement of current public- and private-sector workers and create a subminimum-wage work force of welfare/workfare recipients.

Other key issues that the second session of the 104th Congress could act on include President Clinton's executive order banning the use of permanent replacements by federal contractors, the ability of the National Labor Relations Board to protect worker rights, as well as the future of the Davis-Bacon and Service Contract acts.

Clinton issued an executive order in February barring federal contracts with any company that uses

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30-month struggle ends at Staley

By James B. Parks

After two-and-a-half years of bitter struggle and courageous sacrifice, locked-out members of the Paperworkers prepared to return to work as early as January 10 at A.E. Staley after ratifying a new contract.

Although the 46-month pact was not recommended by either the bargaining committee or the UPIU, members of Local 7837 in Decatur, Ill., voted 56 percent to 44 percent to accept it.

"I'm proud of the fight that this local union has waged," said UPIU Vice President Glenn B. Goss, who headed the union's bargaining over the last several months. "I will be proud to stand with this local and these members as they rebuild a strong union on the shop floor of Staley."

Locked-out workers who submit a "return-to-work selection" form by Jan. 10 will be given jobs by seniority and through the preferences they list, the union said.

The support and "tremendous solidarity" of organized labor "on behalf of these courageous workers played a key role in finally forcing this company to negotiate towards a settlement of this dispute," Goss said.

But the struggle is not over. "Our union is committed to continuing the struggle for justice for Staley workers," he said.

"In particular, we will maintain our fund-raising efforts for several union members who were discharged by the company during this dispute. Because union members will not return to work immediately, there is an ongoing need for assistance for many families in Decatur," he said.

Goss urged unions to continue sending donations to the Local 7837 Food and Assistance Fund. The address is UPIU Region IX Sub-Office, 3125 Kandy Lane, Decatur, Ill. 62526.

The AFL-CIO, through the Strategic Approaches Committee and Community Services Department, rallied to the support of the Staley workers, providing aid for struggling families and exerting pressure on Staley's parent, British conglomerate Tate & Lyle.

The AFL-CIO convention passed a resolution supporting the Staley workers and other union members on strike across the country. The resolution calls upon union members and "decent-minded people" to re-

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Sweeney urges U.S. return to social compact

Following are excerpts from a speech by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney Dec. 15 at the National Press Club in Washington.

Thank you for inviting me to speak with you on behalf of American workers and their families.

Two weeks ago, I had the honor of joining President Clinton's journey of peacemaking all across Ireland. Most Americans think of the problem in Northern Ireland as a religious and political divide — and, of course, it is. But it is important to understand that this generation of "the troubles" began because of an economic divide as well.

In 1968, large numbers of Catholics began to protest against the discrimination that denied them good jobs in growing industries. They were inspired, in part, by the civil rights struggle in our own country, which was a movement for jobs *and* freedom.

After more than a quarter-century of struggle, progress is being made. That is why one of our first stops in Northern Ireland was at the Mackie Engineering Works plant in Belfast.

For years, that plant was a symbol of discrimination and division. Now it is a symbol of progress and peace. On the shop floor, Catholics and Protestants work together. At the bargaining table, labor and management are cooperating. Productivity, profits and wages are all rising, and management is investing in new equipment and new jobs.

The lesson is clear: When there is dignity for everyone, everyone wins.

I am here today to talk about what we can do to reach another historic agreement: a new social compact between business and labor. To find new ways to grow the American economy, American companies and American wages in the new world economy. And to bridge the growing gap between the great majority of Americans who are working longer and harder for less and the fortunate few who are prospering as never before.

To the journalists here today, let me offer this advice: The biggest story of our times will be whether America can find a way to restore the sense that we are all moving and advancing together, not sinking separately.

I am a product of the social compact that lifted America out of the Great Depression and lifted working Americans into the middle class.

My father was an Irish immigrant, a New York City bus driver and a proud member of the Transport Workers Union. Some of my earliest memories are of going to union meetings with him. We'd listen to Mike Quill — whose brogue was better than some I heard in Dublin and Derry — explain paycheck economics to workers and their families.

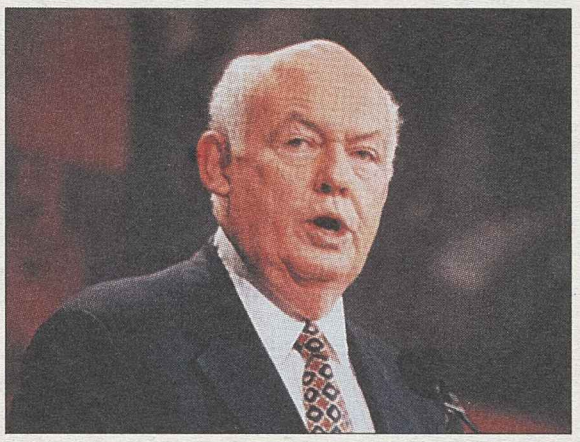
Those were tough times. But working people, business people and public officials shared certain understandings — a social contract, if you will.

Here's what working people knew: If we got up every morning and did our jobs, then we could earn a better life for ourselves and a better chance for our children.

Here's what business people knew: If they paid their workers fairly and plowed some of their profits back into their communities, they could count on loyal employees and loyal consumers. For companies back then, good citizenship was good business.

And here's what our leaders in government understood — and President Kennedy said it best — "A rising tide lifts all boats."

For almost 30 years after winning World War II, we all prospered because we prospered together. We were concerned with raising the standard of living for all Americans — not just accumulating enormous wealth for a fortunate few. That social compact was a formula for the strongest economy, the largest middle class and the most successful society this world has ever known.



'The lesson is clear: When there is dignity for everyone, everyone wins.'

Unfortunately, those days are gone. You all have reported what happened: the oil embargo of 1973; global economic competition; new technologies; and the deregulation of the domestic economy, from transportation to communications.

Business found new ways to compete — ways that may succeed in the short term but which, I submit to you, are short-sighted and ultimately self-destructive.

They competed, not by American teamwork and American know-how, but by driving down labor costs. Caught in an unforgiving global economy, corporate America too often squeezed the last possible ounce of productivity out of American workers, and then threw them on the scrap heap of unemployment or old age, with reduced pensions and health coverage.

Consider the stories you've reported on the business page:

Chase Manhattan and Chemical Bank announce a merger that will put 12,000 people out of work — and their stock goes up. Does a rising tide now sink all ships — except for the luxury yachts?

And what's wrong with this picture: Caterpillar is doing great, racking up record profits, enjoying great productivity. So they decide to install a two-tier wage system, schedule work on the weekends without paying overtime and reject pattern bargaining. They force thousands of workers out on strike, commit 300 unfair labor practices and rack up more record profits.

And, finally, how about this picture: The state of Arizona and the city of Phoenix bail America West Airlines out of bankruptcy with more than $100 million dollars in tax breaks and revenue bonds. The airline agrees not to contract out hangar jobs and rebounds with 11 straight quarters of profitability and stacks up $300 million in reserves. Then the Teamsters crank up an organizing drive aimed at machinists working for America West. America West shows its respect for our labor laws and thanks the community by illegally firing 500 $35,000-a-year machinists and contracting out their jobs to a company in Everett, Washington, where machinists make only $21,000.

For American workers and their families, these are snapshots from hell. They paint an ugly portrait of an economy that has lost respect for workers and the jobs they do.

You have reported what this means for workers: Between 1947 and 1973, the median paychecks of American workers more than doubled — and the bottom 20 percent enjoyed the biggest gains. But since 1973, median earnings have fallen by about 15 percent, and the bottom 20 percent have fallen the furthest behind. More than 40 percent of all earnings gains have gone to the richest 1 percent.

Meanwhile, wealth became even more concentrated. The top 20 percent of all households now controls more than 55 percent of all wealth. The rest of us — 80 percent of all American households — get to split the rest.

Profits are up. Productivity is up. Executive compensation is up. The stock market is up. Worker wages and health benefits and pensions are down.

Now, you're reporting how great gaps in wages and wealth are hurting American companies and the American economy.

America is becoming edgier, angrier and meaner. Until we ease the growing gaps in work, wages and wealth, you will be sending more dispatches from a wounded nation — more militia movements, more bombings, more hate crimes and more of the quiet anguish of Americans losing their sense of a common destiny and a common purpose. America will become more like the trouble spots where we send our sons and daughters to keep the peace.

So what can we do about it?

Of course, American business must change. But I stand before you today as president of the AFL-CIO because American labor must also change.

First, we have to reach out to unorganized workers — because that is the only way we can build a stronger movement. As our membership strength has declined, so has our bargaining power. It used to be that strong unions lifted all workers up; now, non-union employers are dragging all workers down.

Here's the truth: Our weakness encouraged employers to take the low road. Only by rebuilding our strength can we bring American business back to the high road of high wages.

Second, we have to reach out to management — from a position of strength — because that is the only way we can build a stronger, high-wage economy.

We can no longer afford the luxury of pretending that productivity, quality and competitiveness are not our business. They are our business, our jobs and our paychecks. Too many workers have suffered because of failed and foolish, short-sighted management policies. We need to follow the example of workers and their unions in companies and government agencies and school systems across the country who are winning a voice in improving the products they make and the services they deliver.

Our challenge to management is to avoid conflict, not promote it. Let's spend our time and our money and our energy pursuing higher profits and higher wages.

Next year, we will begin to offer these challenges not only to the leaders of labor and business but to all Americans.

Early next spring, the AFL-CIO will begin to hold hearings on falling living standards in communities across the country. We will ask working men and women what is happening to their jobs, their pay-

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Federal worker Lisa Bowman explains the impact of the prolonged government shutdown on her and her family, including 2-month-old son, Michael. They are trying to make ends meet on half of one paycheck.

Federal workers held hostage

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

For Lisa Bowman, a $28,000 administrative technician for the National Zoo, the government shutdown is not about trillion-dollar budgets, "it's about buying diapers for my 2-month-old son, paying the rent, buying groceries and paying insurance."

Bowman held her son, Michael, as she explained during a Jan. 3 Government Employees press conference how she and her husband waited until their 30s to have children, when they thought they would be more financially secure. "Now, during my three months of maternity leave, I am not being paid, and my husband, who is an independent contractor for the government, received about half of his paycheck," she added.

"We've got to take these 73 House freshmen on. Everywhere they go, they need to run into a federal employee," said AFGE President John N. Sturdivant, referring to the lawmakers who were blocking the federal workers' return to their jobs. He was joined by several federal employees from across the country and Rep. Albert Wynn (D-Md.) during the press conference at the union's Washington headquarters.

Commenting on a federal judge's decision to deny a union request to temporarily bar the government from forcing employees to work without pay during the shutdown, Sturdivant declared, "Involuntary servitude is contrary to the Constitution, and the union will continue to argue the case on its merits."

"The American public must ask whether members of Congress, with salaries of $133,600, care that thousands of federal employees cannot pay their bills and feed their children without a paycheck," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

"Meanwhile, job safety and health hazards go unchecked, children's toys are not inspected, federal housing loans are not processed and applications for college loans and grants are sitting on federal workers' desks," he said.

Also affected are government employees represented by the Service Employees and AFSCME. "We insist that federal workers not be the cannon fodder in the Republican political war with President Clinton, and their crusade against government services and the living standard of the working American," said SEIU President Richard W. Cordtz.

Following the union's press briefing, more than 500 government employees marched and held a rally in front of the U.S. Department of State. The union was joined by the American Foreign Service Association, White House political appointees and several workers who said they had never participated in a union rally.

The crowd bellowed "come November we will remember" as Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO President Joslyn N. Williams promised, "We're not going to take it anymore, because on election night we're going to send a message . . . we're sending Newt on the midnight train back to Georgia."

To help federal workers, the AFL-CIO has worked with AFGE to create a $5 million fund to provide federal workers with low- or no-interest loans, said Sweeney. The Community Services Department is also assisting federal employees with food, clothing, emergency medical needs and other items.

Workers can call AFGE's hotline at 202/639-6401 for information and assistance.

Workers gear up for legislative fight

Continued from Page 1

permanent replacement workers for strikers. Senate Democrats rebuffed efforts to overturn the order through filibusters on both the Department of Defense authorization and the Labor/HHS appropriations bills.

However, nearly half of the 13 appropriations bills have been stalled, both because of unacceptably low funding levels and because Republicans have tried to attach legislative riders to funding bills in order to circumvent the normal legislative process.

The House-passed version of the Labor/HHS bill was the vehicle for riders that attacked workplace safety and other fundamental worker rights. One rider would stop OSHA from developing or implementing ergonomic standards. Another would severely restrict the NLRB from going to court to persuade a judge that an employer should stop an unfair labor practice —such as firing union supporters — during an organizing drive. Another banned implementation of Clinton's executive order on striker replacements.

But labor heavily lobbied the Senate, and all but the ban on striker replacements were removed in committee. However, because it remained, Senate Democrats have prevented the bill from reaching the floor.

Attacks were made on the Davis-Bacon and Service Contract acts, which remain under consideration in the second session of the 104th Congress.

Transit workers faced the loss of their collective bargaining rights under Section 13(c) under the House version of the 1996 transportation appropriations bill. That provision was stripped when 44 GOP House members joined a near-solid Democratic contingent in opposition.

The first session of the 104th also stands out for forcing the longest government shutdown in history, tossing hundreds of thousands of federal employees out of work and putting at risk vital services to America's elderly, veterans and children **(See story, this page.)**

The unprecedented shutdown was the result of the GOP's stubborn insistence on extreme cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and education to pay for tax cuts for the rich as the price for reopening the government. The AFL-CIO has urged Clinton to stand firm on his vow to protect those programs and to gear any tax cuts to working families, not the wealthy.

As a result of the radical agenda presented by the Republicans, the past session of Congress was the least productive since the end of World War II, with only 67 bills enacted, compared with 210 in the 103rd's first session and an average of about 200 a year since 1945.

Ergonomics cases climb ever higher

Numbers help foster opposition to measures

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Ergonomics remains the scourge of the workplace, while Republican-backed job safety legislation remains a target of workers.

Numbers released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in late December reveal the continuing upward swing in the numbers of repetitive stress injuries in the absence of a federal standard on ergonomics.

In 1994, more than 332,000 cases of cumulative trauma disorder were reported — an increase of about 800 percent over the last decade.

The BLS report "underscores the desperate need for an OSHA ergonomics standard to prevent crippling repetitive motion injuries and illnesses and for OSHA to do more to focus its efforts in high-hazard industries," said Peg Seminario, AFL-CIO job safety and health director.

"It also shows that efforts of Republicans in Congress to stop OSHA's ergonomics standard and to slash OSHA's budget and enforcement program are wrongheaded," she said, "and will leave millions of American workers without much-needed protection."

America's workers have fought those efforts at every turn, appearing at congressional hearings and engaging in letter-writing campaigns, telephone banks, leafleting, rallies and marches in home districts across the country. The latest effort was aimed at Rep. William F. Goodling (R-Pa.), as 500 OSHA supporters gathered in his district Dec. 28 for a "Rally to Save Workers' Lives" and to take him to task for his co-sponsorship of, and support for, H.R. 1834, the anti-OSHA bill of Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.).

In addition to the rally, at which Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts and Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President Bill George spoke, the effort included a mailing to union families and radio and newspaper ads.

Ballenger's bill seeks to combine the Occupational Safety and Health Administration with the Mine Safety and Health Administration, make compliance with many job safety laws voluntary and tear down the established system of fines and penalties, replacing most with warnings or other meaningless punishments.

A similar bill pending in the Senate, S. 1423, was introduced late in the session. One measure of the success workers have had in convincing legislators these are anti-worker initiatives is that not one senator has signed on to S. 1423 since its introduction.

The BLS survey results show there is much left to be done to protect workers on the job.

The results, released shortly before the lengthy government shutdown, were mixed. The workplace injury rate was cut slightly from 1993 — from 8.5 to 8.4 cases for every 100 full-time workers — showing some progress in improving worker protection.

That progress was most obvious in the construction industry, which reported the greatest decrease and its lowest injury rate in 20 years.

However, overall injury and illness numbers remain unacceptably high in many high-hazard industries, such as meatpacking, foundries and auto assembly, Seminario said, and in some sectors the rates are increasing.

In other areas, the BLS survey reported:

- The manufacturing industry has the highest total number of injury and illness cases (2.23 million), followed by wholesale and retail trade (1.65 million) and services (1.5 million).
- Injuries and illnesses in the mining industry fell from 7.3 cases per 100 workers in 1993 to 6.3 cases per 100 workers in 1994.
- Finance, insurance and real estate have the lowest injury and illness rates.

The BLS injury and illness report is based on information from nearly 250,000 private-industry establishments and excludes the self-employed, small farms and government employees.

Worldwide efforts aided Staley workers

Continued from Page 1

frain from doing business with these companies and their corporate allies.

The federation also actively backed a UPIU campaign to pressure Staley's biggest customers, Miller Brewing and PepsiCo, to stop using the company's corn sweetener until the lockout was ended.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney took the workers' cause directly to Sir Neal Shaw, chief executive officer of Tate & Lyle, and to the CEO of Staley during a December meeting in London. The federation also helped organize a campaign by religious leaders around the world to lobby Shaw and Tate & Lyle stockholders to press for a settlement.

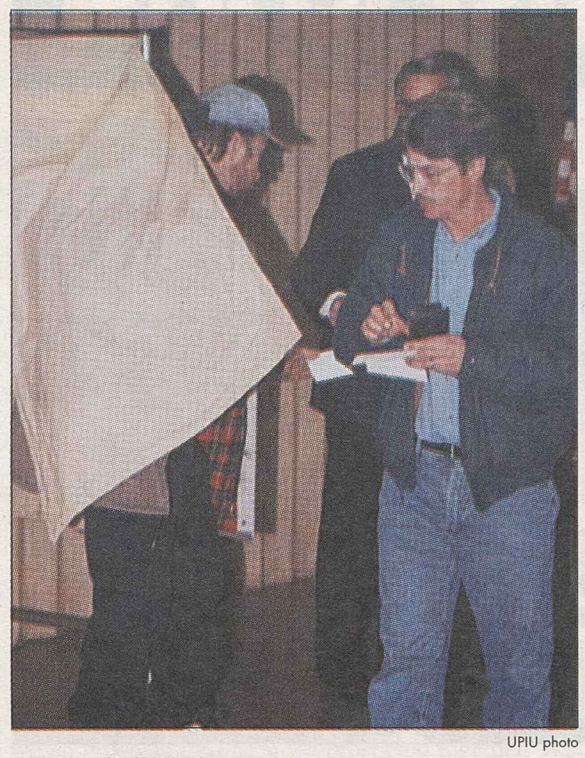
Various unions and local and state AFL-CIOs donated thousands of dollars of food and Christmas toys to the locked-out families as well.

The new agreement contains several changes that removed "some of the sharp edges" from the proposal rejected by the union in July, said bargaining committee chairman Allain Ferris.

A key change was the removal of language giving the company the right to discipline workers with "reasonable" cause. The new contract calls for disciplinary actions after "just cause," language which the union said should give "a fighting chance" to seven workers who were terminated during the nine months before the lockout.

The new contract also returns the standard grievance and arbitration clause. The union further beat back a company effort to prohibit bargaining-unit workers from taking time off the job for union business.

On the key issue of work scheduling, the company reverted to its initial demand for 12-hour shifts with 30-day rotations. In last summer's package, Staley attempted to push workers into 12-hour shifts on three days' rotation.



UPIU photo

Members of UPIU Local 7837 vote on new contract at A.E. Staley Co., in Decatur, Ill., in late December.

On subcontracting, the union gained language that guarantees that outside contractors will not be used for the purpose of "laying off permanent bargaining unit employees unless . . . such use of subcontractors and concurrent layoff will result in an improvement in cost, quality, technology or operating efficiency."

The company submitted the new proposal Dec. 13, one day after members elected former bargaining committee chair Jim Shinall as president of the local, replacing incumbent David Watts. The ratification vote took place Dec. 21-22.

Supporters are urged to continue sending donations to Local 7837 Food and Assistance Fund, c/o UPIU Region IX Sub-Office, 3125 Kandy Lane, Decatur, Ill. 62526

Unions win $50 million in back pay

Some 1,200 International Paper employees could share more than $50 million in back pay under an order by the National Labor Relations Board.

"We are pleased that the labor board has upheld what we knew all along, namely that IP's attempt to contract out our members' jobs during the Mobile (Ala.) lockout was illegal and that the company owes these union members back pay," said Paperworkers Vice President Don Langham. "I am proud that our international union has stayed with this case for the past eight years. We will continue to do so until these workers finally receive the justice they deserve."

A three-member NLRB panel ruled Dec. 18 that IP violated federal labor law when it tried to contract out union members' work during a 19-month lockout in 1987 and 1988 at its Mobile, Ala., paper mill. IP announced it would appeal the ruling.

An administrative law judge in 1992 ordered the company to pay back wages and interest to the workers for a nine-month period from August 1987 through May 1988, during which IP permanently contracted the work to notorious union-busters BE&K Construction of Birmingham, Ala. Union attorneys estimate the total amount owed could be more than $50 million.

IP locked out production and maintenance workers at the mill represented by four UPIU and one Electrical Workers locals on March 21, 1987, in an effort to impose contract demands for concessions in wages and work conditions. Though the subcontract hiring was originally temporary, the company made it permanent as a ploy to pressure the unions to accept its demands.

The workers returned to work in October 1988 after the company terminated the agreement with BE&K and after they ratified a new contract. Successor contracts are still in force there, Langham said.

The long battle spotlights the difficulties in pursuing labor law complaints, the union said. An unholy alliance between Republicans and anti-labor employers has made numerous attacks against the NLRB, slowing its ability to rule on cases, the union added.

— James B. Parks

Accountability for workplace conditions falls into the GAP

By Muriel H. Cooper

Responding to growing pressure from UNITE and consumer activists, the GAP Inc. agreed to take direct responsibility for the working conditions under which its clothing is produced.

The company signed an agreement with the National Labor Committee, whose members include UNITE, to use an independent third party to monitor its offshore contractors. The GAP also agreed to translate its corporate code of conduct into the languages of the 47 countries in which the company has factories, return production to El Salvador, reinstate fired union leaders and members and improve plant conditions.

"The agreement . . . is a victory for all of us who are determined to eliminate sweatshops at home and abroad," said Jay Mazur, president of UNITE. "We are in a new global world order and the GAP has recognized their global responsibility for offshore production. They have moved in the right direction."

UNITE has played an active role in the GAP campaign, bringing in two Central American teenagers who produce goods for the retailer and coordinating national demonstrations and leafleting efforts.

"We had active member support from New York City to San Francisco to Minnesota," said Mazur. "I think that, along with the fact that we worked with various groups and advocates, made us successful.

"If the new global economy is to benefit workers and their families, we will need coalitions, cooperation and coordination like the NLC to make manufacturers and retailers bear the responsibility for the conditions under which the goods they buy are produced," he said.

The NLC is a nonprofit research and human rights group supported by various unions, religious and community groups.

The GAP has faced months of escalating controversy about labor rights violations at its offshore assembly plant in El Salvador.

Last summer, 18-year-old Judith Yanira Viera of El Salvador and 17-year-old Claudia Leticia Molina from Honduras recounted the harrowing abuses they faced while toiling to make clothes for the GAP.

The women said they were timed for restroom breaks, were victims of sexual harassment and worked long hours in unsafe conditions.

Viera was among 350 workers fired after they tried to organize a union. Meanwhile, the manufacturers threatened to pull out of El Salvador and move more production to Honduras.

"The U.S. and Canadian people are not interested in purchasing products made by 14- and 15-year-olds working 12-, 14- and even 21-hour shifts under slave-like conditions," said Charles Kernaghan, NLC's executive director.

"In the face of opposition from other retailers and manufacturers, the GAP has taken the high road in agreeing to third-party independent monitoring of its offshore contractors," he said.

SEIU gains new partnership for organizing

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Service Employees Local 509 won a major victory when four Massachusetts mental health and retardation agencies signed a labor-management agreement calling for a "non-adversarial process" for union representation.

"These employers, by permitting their employees to choose to unionize, free of intimidation, have demonstrated not only their respect for their employees but for the clients they serve as well," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney during the Dec. 14 signing.

SEIU Local 509 President Ed Malloy said the agencies' approach "is in sharp contrast to the sort of ugly and contentious battles that usually accompany organizing campaigns. This is a big step forward for our Community Care Workers Campaign."

The agreement, titled "Creating a New Partnership," could serve as a model for other agreements and already is being reviewed by labor groups and management representatives in other cities, the union said.

Massachusetts agencies participating in the agreement include Better Community Living in New Bedford, Cooperative for Human Services of Malden, CASCAP Inc. of Cambridge and Renaissance Club of Lowell. The agencies are under contract by the state government to provide residential and/or vocational services to mentally ill adults.

The three-page agreement lays out the manner in which the 500 employees of the publicly funded agencies will be given the opportunity to consider union representation. Under the terms of the accord, the employers agree to allow union officials to educate employees about the union process in an air of neutrality and to refrain from discouraging workers from joining the union.

After union officials are given an opportunity to talk with employees, the company and union will agree on a method, such as a check of authorization cards by the Labor Guild of the Archdiocese of Boston, to confirm that a majority of workers favors unionization. All disputes over implementation would be settled by a mediator.

With majority support for union representation at each of the four agencies, the parties would negotiate a multiemployer collective bargaining agreement. The union also is engaged in talks with other employers that were not yet ready to sign the agreement.

Only days prior to the signing ceremony, Sweeney told the California Association of Public Hospitals he could not "think of a place where management needs labor as a partner more than in public health."

The state government has funded mental health/mental retardation programs and services at the same level for the past eight fiscal years, according to the union. The need for a more powerful alliance to secure appropriate government support prompted the parties to explore the idea of a new labor-management relationship.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka joins SEIU members and supporters in Washington to champion the cause of low-paid janitors and protest the union-busting tactics of U.S. Service Industries.

Justice for Janitors campaign expands

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The Service Employees have escalated the aggressive Justice for Janitors campaign to force companies to clean up their acts.

From California to New York, Justice for Janitors is using confrontational tactics that borrow liberally from the civil rights movement — blocking streets and marching for justice.

The union also is taking its case to shareholders and to the international labor movement to raise public consciousness about the unfair treatment of some of the nation's lowest-paid workers.

In Washington, SEIU Secretary-Treasurer Richard W. Cordtz (since elected president of the union) and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka led hundreds of SEIU members and supporters in two protests late last year, marching to the buildings in the posh downtown district cleaned by the anti-union U.S. Service Industries.

"We're here to tell USSI and every other mean-spirited, profit-hungry contractor that there's a new labor movement in town, and we're about to become their worst nightmare," Trumka said.

Earning only $5.50 an hour with no benefits, Amy Parker said, "I will keep on with this struggle to get what I deserve because I know it is right." Parker has worked for the company for almost three years.

"Before USSI got the contract to clean my building, there were 18 African-Americans. Now, I am the only one," she said.

The National Labor Relations Board in December handed down its third decision against USSI in the past 16 months, finding that it threatened, interrogated and fired employees, and stating that the company has "a history of pervasive illegal conduct."

"The District cannot afford to see companies like USSI get away with such blatant mistreatment of and exploitation of workers," said Jay Hessey, executive director of SEIU Local 82, which represents more than 5,000 workers in the Washington area.

"It is imperative for the community and the public to join the workers and rise up against low-paying jobs and unfair working conditions that will ultimately drain the city and the economy," he said.

At Hewlett-Packard's Palo Alto, Calif., headquarters, meanwhile, a press conference and rally heralded a stepped-up campaign to expose the company, which "condones the abuses by Somers Building Maintenance," the contractor that cleans two H-P buildings in the Sacramento area.

"We will take our message across the United States and across international borders to win unprecedented national and international solidarity to expose Hewlett-Packard," said SEIU Local 1877 President Mike Garcia at the campaign kick-off.

Local 1877's campaign will "educate the public here in Silicon Valley with marches, protests, press conferences and other legal activities to bring attention to the situation of the janitors at H-P facilities," he added.

For nearly a year, Somers has waged an intense campaign against its mainly immigrant work force, which is struggling to unionize. Workers have been silenced and intimidated in numerous ways, according to the union, which represents janitors in 10 counties in northern California.

The union has been trying to organize the janitors at H-P plants in Sacramento and Roseville for two years. But Somers has created a company union called CSE Local No. 1, according to SEIU officials.

Recently, two union activists were beaten without provocation. Workers speaking at the demonstration said they had been physically assaulted by Local 1 stewards, including one employee who said she had been sexually assaulted.

Still more workers are owed millions of dollars by the company for unpaid wages, overtime and equipment reimbursement.

Local 1 does not have a tax identification number and it operates out of a post office box, said Garcia.

"Local 1 was forced upon the janitors by the supervisors and the owners of the company to join this union," Garcia said. "They even negotiated a contract without the participation of the workers that called for no wage increases and no increases in benefits, but (the workers) have to pay dues."

Bringing in new members

Since Justice for Janitors was created 10 years ago, the campaign has organized an estimated 35,000 new members, mostly Hispanic and African-American.

The janitors have made the greatest headway in Los Angeles County, where the union ranks of those who clean high-rises rose from 30 percent to 90 percent.

The union has defied a protracted recession in a region long hostile to unions, battling one of any city's most powerful groups — commercial real estate owners.

Another major victory for the campaign occurred at Apple Computer, where company chief John Sculley finally wearied of meeting protesters everywhere he went — at shareholders' meetings, at a MacWorld exhibit, even at his home — and agreed to push Shine Building Maintenance Inc. to settle with the union. Other corporate targets have included Oracle Corp., Mattel Inc. and Toyota Motor Corp.

After numerous successes running these corporate campaigns, the SEIU eventually brought a case to the AFL-CIO Strategic Approaches Committee in August, asking the federation to assist in its efforts to get Oliver Carr Realty and its primary supplier of capital, the Equitable Companies, to use union cleaning contractors in Washington. Equitable's principal owner is Axa, a French company.

Bill Ragen, national organizing director of the campaign, defended as necessary the use of confrontational tactics, saying, "Unions are not going to get employers to concede to our wishes without a fight."

Among the union's most recent targets are several suburban Chicago cleaning companies, including one called Tenacious Cleaning. "We'll see who's more tenacious at the end," Ragen said.

STATES

N.C. civil rights struggle

What began as a dispute between workers and management in Greensboro, N.C., has moved on to a broader stage involving religious, community and civil rights supporters, evoking memories of the civil rights struggle almost 30 years ago.

UNITE members called for a Christmas season boycott over the practices at that city's Kmart distribution center, which discriminate against the majority non-white work force.

The community showed its support for workers during a Dec. 18 demonstration at which 11 people — including members of the Pulpit Forum, Greensboro's African-American ministers' alliance — were arrested.

The retailer has refused to pay the majority non-white work force wages comparable to those paid at the company's other distribution facilities employing majority white work forces. Workers at those facilities, on average, earn a top pay rate of $4.60 more per hour than the Greensboro workers.

Chavez-Thompson reports

Nashville, Tenn.

Tennessee AFL-CIO President James G. Neeley and Secretary-Treasurer Eddie Bryan won unanimous re-election during the state convention, which heard from AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson on efforts by the new Sweeney administration to get union members more involved in politics.

Nearly 400 delegates discussed plans for seeking implementation of a state minimum wage and reform of the workers' compensation system, in addition to the casting of ballots in elections for the top spots, executive officers and vice presidents.

Chavez-Thompson, outlining the results of the recent Garin-Hart research poll, said labor did not do a good job in getting union members to vote for pro-worker candidates in 1994. She said the AFL-CIO would be working with state and local federations next year to improve labor's political efforts.

Other speakers included Laborers President Arthur A. Coia, Paperworkers President Wayne E. Glenn, U.S. Rep. Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.), A. Philip Randolph Institute President Norman Hill and various state elected officials.

Maine re-elects officers

Rockport, Maine

Maine AFL-CIO President Charles O'Leary and Vice President Gwendolyn Gatcomb were re-elected for four-year terms during the 20th biennial convention.

Delegates also elected new executive board members. Maine Secretary-Treasurer Edward Gorham is not up for re-election until 1997.

Delegates participated in workshops on promoting women and gender equity and the implications of Maine's Productivity Task Force for public- and private-sector workers. The state federation also conducted a half-day session for union retirees. Speakers included Rep. John Baldacci (D-Maine); AFL-CIO Regional Director Frank Myers; AFL-CIO COPE Regional Director Michael Noonan; James Ellenberger, assistant director of the AFL-CIO Occupational Safety and Health Department; and Barbara Niccoli, AFL-CIO field representative.

Gore promises a fight

North Conway, N.H.

Vice President Gore reassured some 150 delegates to the New Hampshire AFL-CIO convention that the administration will fight anti-worker policies pending in Congress.

"We intend to fight Newt Gingrich and the GOP at every turn to protect workers and their families," he said.

New Hampshire AFL-CIO President Mark MacKenzie and Secretary-Treasurer Daniel Courchesne were re-elected for four-year terms. John Amrol of the Service Employees was elected executive vice president. Former Executive Vice President Tom Bascom did not seek re-election.

Delegates also voted to increase per capita by 7 cents to 73 cents. Speakers included New Hampshire Speaker of the House Harold Burns and John Meese, president of the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department.

A brand new year with the same old lines

Budget cuts and layoffs mean economy drops ball

By David Kameras

New Year's Day has come and gone, but workers may still be wishing for auld lang syne.

"Slower growth, higher unemployment, weak wage increases, but fairly strong profit gains — this is the picture painted by most economic prognosticators for 1996," reported Rudy Oswald, chief economist of the AFL-CIO.

Despite the fact that the nation will complete five years of positive growth in April with little sign of inflation, Oswald said, "workers fail to share in the gains. The stock market is booming while job insecurity rises."

The prospects for the new year are unlikely to counter the concerns of what Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich calls "the anxious class," with growth expected to slow to an adjusted 2.6 percent, down from 3.3 percent this year, unemployment rising to 5.7 percent and inflation unchanged at 2.9 percent.

Oswald warned that Republican budget policy — curtailing the role of government generally, forcing severe cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, training, education, enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and many other programs — will hurt the economy and worsen the quality of life for most Americans.

At the same time, continued "restructuring" of American businesses means downward pressure on wages and upward pressure on the Misery Index.

In an example of such "restructuring," Grand Union is proceeding with plans this month to shut warehouses in Mount Kisco, N.Y., and Carlstadt, N.J., at the cost of 450 jobs.

"In late October, Grand Union told us they intended to ship our jobs to Vermont, outlining millions in savings we had to match to keep these jobs in New York and New Jersey," said IBT Warehouse Division Director Tom Leedham. "We immediately asked Grand Union for the information behind these numbers so that we could come up with alternatives. Grand Union didn't give us the information we were looking for; instead, it merely went through the motions with us, never seriously looking at any alternatives for saving these jobs."

The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that industry employment will grow only 14 percent from 1994 to 2005, down substantially from the 24 percent growth logged in the preceding 11 years. While 17.7 million jobs will be created, manufacturing will lose 1.3 million positions, and will only account for one in eight jobs, rather than the current one in seven.

"While corporate profits have been robust and productivity is up, workers have not shared in the wealth they helped to create. The distribution of income is badly skewed in favor of the well-off," Oswald said. "The American worker needs a raise."

That theme was echoed by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, who told reporters Dec. 15 of the need "to bridge the growing gap between the great majority of Americans who are working longer and harder for less and the fortunate few who are prospering as never before."

New evidence of the gap showed up in November's economic data, with real wages declining 0.4 percent, down 0.1 percent for the year and 11.9 percent over 15 years.

With inflation nearly non-existent, this decline is largely attributable to stagnant wages. Consumer prices (CPI-W) were unchanged in November, with such basics as food and energy actually declining.

BARGAINING

IAM, Pratt agree

The Machinists ratified a new three-year contract with Pratt and Whitney that raises wages and maintains seniority and work rules.

Under the agreement, some 6,100 workers at the East Hartford, Conn., plant received a $1,500 bonus on Dec. 7. Wages will increase 3.5 percent in the first year, 3 percent in the second year and 2.5 percent in the last year.

Employees also gained an immediate cost-of-living adjustment of 20 cents per hour, to be followed by a COLA every six months for the life of the accord, not to exceed 18 cents semiannually.

No changes were made in seniority or work rules, but employees will be allowed to bid on projects before they are contracted out, said James Parent, spokesman for IAM Lodge 91.

UM workers OK pact

More than 1,400 maintenance workers at the University of Minnesota will receive an average 4 percent wage increase under a new two-year contract ratified Dec. 1.

The contract, which must be approved by the university regents, also calls for a lump-sum payment in the second year and an increase in the shift differential.

The contract calls for a 2 percent increase in each year for many job classifications, said Susan Mauren, business agent for Teamsters Local 320, which represents the workers. Some classifications will receive different wage packages, but each averages out to a 2 percent increase in each year, she said.

New gains Championed

Some 1,500 production and maintenance Paperworkers at Champion International Corp.'s plant in Courtland, Ala., will see an immediate 2.5 percent wage increase, followed by 3 percent annual raises from 1996 to 2000 and a final 1.5 percent increase in the last six months of a new six-and-one-half-year settlement.

Pension benefits also are boosted, a gain-sharing program is to be established and all 1,500 plant employees have new 401(k) accounts with an initial employer contribution of $500, subject to further annual contributions of up to $600.

Conn. hospital antes up

Management came back to the table with more money after nurses and technicians belonging to the Connecticut State Federation of Teachers, an AFT affiliate, voted overwhelmingly Dec. 11 to strike Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London.

The new three-year contract, accepted two days before the Dec. 23 strike date, will give step workers 5.8 percent annual increases in the first two years and 4.8 percent in the third, with those at the top receiving 3 percent each year. A move to charge part-time workers more for medical insurance was scrapped, and premium pay for weekend shifts will be retained for current employees.

National hearings to spotlight wages

Continued from Page 1

40,000," Rosenthal said. Another 100,000 fliers comparing the candidates' records are being produced, and phone banks have been set up across the state, he said.

At least 12 AFL-CIO field staff have been assigned to the race, assisted by personnel released for the campaign by the AFT, Boilermakers, Bricklayers, Government Employees, Laborers, Letter Carriers, Postal Workers, Roofers, Sheet Metal Workers, Transportation Communications Union and Teamsters.

While the Senate is likely to remain a roadblock for more radical House efforts on worker issues, workers and their representatives are hopeful that an aggressive campaign will help to reverse the tide in the House, where a business-oriented gang of Republicans swept to power in 1994, pushing through Newt Gingrich's so-called Contract with America and threatening a number of programs that benefit working families.

The political campaigns will be set against the second term of the 104th Congress, which is expected to continue pushing anti-union legislation in the areas of job safety, labor law and prevailing wages. The hearings offer an opportunity for unions to clearly define the issues for the American people.

Sweeney said the AFL-CIO will defiantly draw the line on wages, shining a spotlight on those legislators who call for policies and laws that undercut U.S. wages, which have been taking a pounding through 20 years of corporate deal-making and government disengagement.

"The biggest story of our times will be whether America can find a way to restore the sense that we are all moving and advancing together, not sinking separately," he said in the NPC speech.

Sweeney predicted that "if Americans vote on the issue of who can lift the poor and secure the middle class, I am confident they will make the right choices for president and Congress."

But the battle to reverse the House tilt toward business will be difficult with the Gingrich Republicans holding a 234-200-1 advantage, which includes the seat they picked up Dec. 12 in a special election to replace retiring California Rep. Norman Y. Mineta. Labor-endorsed Jerry Estruth (D) was defeated by Tom Campbell, a well-known elected official who managed to avoid Gingrich comparisons.

As 1995 closed out, however, signs of the Democratic turnaround visible in the November elections cropped up elsewhere. Unions helped candidates win a special House election in Illinois and the mayoral race in San Francisco.

Jesse Jackson Jr. was an easy victor in the campaign to replace Rep. Mel Reynolds in Chicago, where AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka appeared on Jackson's behalf. Trumka had helped to mobilize the union vote during the November election, when labor-endorsed Gov. Paul D. Patton (D) prevailed.

Former California House Speaker Willie Brown's easy victory over incumbent San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan benefited from a strong labor push that included released-time workers from AFSCME, the Operating Engineers and the Service Employees. Local AFL-CIO President Josie Mooney also used a LaborNeighbor program that involved 400 volunteers from 14 unions for Election Day phone calls and walk-arounds.

State and local AFL-CIOs will be the cornerstone of organized labor's political activities this year. Principal officers from those groups will meet in Washington Jan. 26, the day after the General Board meeting, to discuss strategy for the 1996 elections.

Management challenged to cooperate

Continued from Page 2

checks and their family budgets. We'll take our show on the road — from Iowa to New Hampshire, from the South to the Midwest and the Far West — to put the issue of wages at the center of political debate.

We want to get even more of the suggestions that already are pouring in from unlikely sources, like this letter I got last week from Rusty Hills in East Lansing, Michigan. He says, "As a conservative Republican, I suspect you and I part company on most political issues. But as a fellow Catholic, I believe strongly in just wages and an equitable distribution of profits." He goes on to make a recommendation: that we bargain wages by comparing the percentage increase in executive compensation to percentage increases for workers over the past 10 years.

In every speech I give, from the Press Club to the picket lines, I try to make this simple point: *America needs a raise*. Next year, we'll be asking every candidate for public office to tell working Americans how they'll get them a raise.

Then in June, we're going to start a Union Summer, as we send a thousand college students and young workers to organize voter registration and living-wage campaigns across the country. We're going to begin a dialogue with working America — union members and future members alike.

And, come September, we'll have a Union Fall, as we organize and mobilize working Americans around the fundamental issue of raising wages and increasing incomes. If Americans vote on the issue of who can lift the poor and secure the middle class, I am confident they will make the right choices for president and Congress.

I believe that, in the words of the Nobel Prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney, whose writings inspired so many fighters for peace and justice: "History says don't hope on this side of the grave. But, once in a lifetime, the longed-for tidal wave of justice can rise up — and hope and history rhyme."

Soon, you will see our labor movement "rising up," like "the longed-for tidal wave of justice." And working men and women will once again make "hope and history rhyme."

NEWSMAKERS

President Clinton is planning to name **Sarah M. Fox** to the National Labor Relations Board. Fox has been the minority labor counsel to the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee and served as chief labor counsel to the committee since 1990. She also served as counsel to the Bricklayers from 1982 to 1990.

The Senate has confirmed **Annie H. Lewis** and **Susan King** to fill policy and press positions with the Department of Labor. Lewis replaces **Timothy Barnicle** as assistant secretary for policy, while King replaces Lewis, who had been in charge of the department's press relations as assistant secretary for public affairs.

The Senate also endorsed reappointing **Ernest W. DuBester** to serve on the National Mediation Board and approved the nomination of **James C. Riley** to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review commission. Prior to his 1993 appointment to the board, DuBester was a legislative representative of the AFL-CIO.

Richard W. Cordtz, newly elected president of the Service Employees, will appoint **Bruce A. Miller** as general counsel and **Victor Van Bourg** as special counsel for the union.

Bill Samuel, legislative director of the Mine Workers, will join the Labor Department as associate deputy secretary, reporting to Deputy Secretary **Thomas Glynn**. Samuel has been UMWA's chief lobbyist since 1985.

Several labor representatives have been elected to join the National Consumers League's board of directors. **Willie Baker** of the Food and Commercial Workers was re-elected vice chair. **Markley Roberts**, assistant director of the AFL-CIO's department of economic research, was elected secretary. Teamsters General President **Ron Carey** and **Leland Swenson** of the National Farmers Union were elected unanimously to the board.

AFL-CIO President **John J. Sweeney** and **Jay Mazur**, president of UNITE, will receive awards from the King Center during the 1996 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Celebration in Atlanta. The awards will be presented during the labor, management, government and social responsibility breakfast, one of several events scheduled to commemorate the slain civil rights leader.

CORRECTION

UNITE Executive Vice President Edgar Romney was misidentified in the Dec. 18 issue of the AFL-CIO News.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper

ORGANIZING

LIUNA scores poultry win

By a 4-to-1 margin, workers at the Peco Foods poultry processing plant in Bay Springs, Miss., voted to join the Laborers.

The workers voted 305-73 for LIUNA after a campaign focused on better wages, safer work conditions and the right not to be harassed and intimidated. The Peco plant is one of several southern poultry plants the union has gained during its ongoing campaign.

"These hard-working people will now have the representation and protection they need and want," said LIUNA organizer Bill Goodrich. "Their vote is a stand against being mistreated by management."

NLRB certifies LIUNA

The National Labor Relations Board has certified the Laborers as the bargaining agent for more than 500 workers at a Case Farms poultry processing plant in Morganton, N.C.

The board adopted a hearing officer's recommendations that Case's objections to a July 1995 election be overruled and the union certified as the bargaining agent.

The organizing drive began in May 1995 after workers walked off their jobs in protest against working conditions in the plant.

The election is part of LIUNA's effort to organize food-processing and other workers throughout the South.

Crider votes UFCW

Workers at Crider Poultry in Metter, Ga., voted overwhelmingly for representation with the Food and Commercial Workers.

UFCW Regional Director Frank Dininger called the 130-64 vote "the first step to bringing decent wages, health insurance and fair treatment to Crider workers."

Most workers at the plant receive little more than the minimum wage and do not have health insurance. Workers also complained of arbitrary discipline that could cost them their jobs.

The union campaign was built around a grass-roots network of workers and their families, Dininger said. It was the second Crider plant organized in Georgia by the UFCW, which has succeeded in a number of campaigns in the state.

"The UFCW is transforming low-wage, no-benefit employment into jobs that offer security for the family and dignity for the worker," Dininger said.

SEIU organizes clinics

Service Employees Local 660 won card-check recognition at three health clinics newly privatized by the County of Los Angeles.

When the county announced it would privatize 28 clinics, the local followed employees into the private sector, organizing them around issues of job retention.

RESOURCES

The **International Labor Communications Association Changing of the Guard Luncheon** will be held at noon Jan. 12 at the Embassy Row Hotel, 2015 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. Steve Rosenthal, newly appointed AFL-CIO political director, is the keynote speaker. Tickets are $28 per person. Contact ILCA at 202/637-5068.

CONFERENCES

A. Philip Randolph Regional Conferences are as follows: West, Jan. 19-21; Northeast, Feb. 9-11; South, Feb. 16-18; Midwest, March 8-10; Southwest, March 29-31. For more information, contact Marnette Rice at 202/289-2774.

Conference on Union Organizing focusing on strategy and sponsored by the AFL-CIO and Cornell University will be held March 31-April 2 at the Maritime Institute Seminar and Conference Center, Linthicum Heights, Md. For more information, contact Kate Bronfenbrenner at Cornell at 607/255-7581, or Sheldon Friedman of the AFL-CIO at 202/637-5310.

PUBLICATIONS

The Resource Catalog: Video, Audio, Print, Advertising and Promotional Materials lists, describes and indexes materials available from the Labor Institute of Public Affairs. Copies are free. **Union Produced Videos** annotates several hundred videos from unions in 15 categories including organizing, collective bargaining and grievance procedures. Copies are $2 each. Contact LIPA, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Salaried and Professional Women: Relevant Statistics and **Licensing and Credentialing of Health Care Professionals: A Literature Review** are two new reports available from the AFL-CIO Department of Professional Employees, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Sexual Harassment is Against the Law is a 17-page brochure that defines sexual harassment and analyzes sample situations. Single copies are free. Contact the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department at 202/347-1461.

The AFL-CIO Department of Economic Research has produced the following booklets: **Research Tools for Organizing and Collective Bargaining** provides a complete listing of available resources for research on companies, employee benefit plans and numerous other topics of interest to an organizer; **Research Tools for Evaluation of Arbitrators** explains the FAIR SYSTEM, which was designed to assist union representatives and union lawyers with the difficult task of eliminating names from a panel of arbitrators. Contact the department at 202/637-5160.

Materials are available for trade unionists interested in helping youth in Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of America attain their **American Labor merit badges**. Contact Alan Bosch in the AFL-CIO Department of Community Services at 202/637-5193.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

This is a list of conventions and conferences scheduled for 1996 by the AFL-CIO and international affiliates, state central bodies and fraternal organizations. Changes and additions will be reported.

DATE	ORGANIZATION	PLACE
March 5-8	Pennsylvania	Philadelphia
March 11-13	Louisiana	Baton Rouge
April 21-24	New Jersey	Atlantic City
April 22-25	Service Employees	Chicago
May 1-3	Arizona	Flagstaff
May 20-24	Distillery Workers	Miami Beach, Fla.
June 6-8	South Dakota	Aberdeen
June 10-12	Idaho	McCall
June 10-12	Communications Workers	Detroit
June 10-21	Flint Glass Workers	Palm Springs, Calif.
June 17-21	AFSCME	Chicago
July 8-12	Hotel & Restaurant	Chicago
July 15-19	Teamsters	Philadelphia
July 29-Aug. 1	California	Los Angeles
Aug. 1-6	AFT	Cincinnati
Aug. 5-8	Steelworkers	Pittsburgh
Aug. 5-9	Fire Fighters	Honolulu
Aug. 5-9	Plumbers & Pipefitters	Las Vegas
Aug. 5-10	Glass, Molders, Pottery	Las Vegas
Aug. 12-16	Iron Workers	Las Vegas
Aug. 12-16	Letter Carriers	Orlando, Fla.
Aug. 15-16	West Virginia	Charleston
Aug. 15-17	Virginia	Williamsburg
Aug. 23-26	Laborers	Las Vegas
Aug. 31-Sept. 1	Farm Workers	N/A
Sept. 4-6	Illinois	Chicago
Sept. 4-6	South Carolina	Myrtle Beach
Sept. 5-6	North Carolina	Raleigh
Sept. 15-18	Missouri	Jefferson City
Sept. 16-18	Minnesota	Rochester
Sept. 16-20	Paperworkers	Las Vegas
Sept. 18-22	Washington	Everett
Sept. 24-26	Ohio	Cincinnati
Sept. 30-Oct. 2	Wisconsin	Green Bay
Oct. 21-25	Chemical Workers	Las Vegas
Nov. 21-25	Electrical Workers	Orlando, Fla.

AFL-CIO Meetings

Jan. 24	AFL-CIO Executive Council	Washington
Jan. 25	AFL-CIO General Board	Washington
Feb. 15-16	Maritime Trades	Bal Harbour, Fla.
Feb. 16	Union Label	Bal Harbour, Fla.
Feb. 17	PED Executive Council	Bal Harbour, Fla.
Feb. 17	Transportation Trades	Bal Harbour, Fla.
Feb. 19-23	AFL-CIO Executive Council	Bal Harbour, Fla.
March 31-April 2	AFL-CIO/Cornell University	Linthicum Heights, Md.
April 14-18	Civil Rights Institute	Silver Spring, Md.
April 21-25	Building & Construction Trades	Washington
May 15-16	AFL-CIO Lawyers Conference	San Francisco
May 29-30	Secretary-Treasurer's Conference	Las Vegas
May 30-June 3	Union Industries Show	Las Vegas
Aug. 6-7	AFL-CIO Executive Council	Chicago
Nov. 11-14	Industrial Union Department	Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

Mexican trucks hit roadblock in NAFTA fray

U.S. agrees to explore union-busting by Sprint

By David Kameras

After intense pressure by organized labor, the Clinton administration delayed implementation of portions of the North American Free Trade Agreement that on Dec. 18 would have opened the southern border to convoys of unsafe trucks.

Meanwhile, a bilateral agreement on a complaint against Sprint Corp. served as a reminder of the weaknesses inherent in the trade pact and as a caution to lawmakers intent on expanding its scope.

The White House move came after the Teamsters filed a motion in federal court Dec. 15 to delay entry of Mexican trucks to California, Texas, Arizona and New Mexico, as provided for by NAFTA. Demonstrations also were held at border crossings at Laredo, Texas; Nogales, Ariz., south of Tucson; and Otay Mesa, Calif., near San Diego. The trucks are scheduled to gain access to the entire country in 2000.

"This is a temporary victory for highway safety — but the real solution is to have American trucking done by American workers with American safety standards and American wages," said IBT General President Ron Carey.

The Teamsters have noted that Mexican trucks are on average three times older than U.S. trucks, up to twice as heavy and are not required to have front brakes. They do not comply with as stringent air pollution or liability insurance requirements as U.S. trucks, and their drivers do not have to receive the same training to transport hazardous materials.

According to a recent study, only 122 out of 835 Mexican trucks entering Texas with hazardous cargo had signs or placards identifying their loads, and 65 of those were wrong. And during a random inspection of 400 trucks crossing the border at Laredo, the cargo and paperwork failed to match 90 percent of the time.

At the same time, the federal government has passed the buck to states often without resources to conduct proper enforcement. California inspects just 2 percent of all vehicles crossing its border, Arizona checks just 1 percent while Texas inspects on average only 15 of the 11,000 trucks that cross each day.

Mexican companies are in such dire financial straits that they can't afford to put safe and reliable trucks on U.S. roads at the present time, according to AFL-CIO economist Gregory Woodhead.

"And at present, we don't have the inspection capability to deal with that fact. It points to the difficulty in integrating two economies that are at such different stages of development, and is indicative of many of the things that have gone wrong with the agreement."

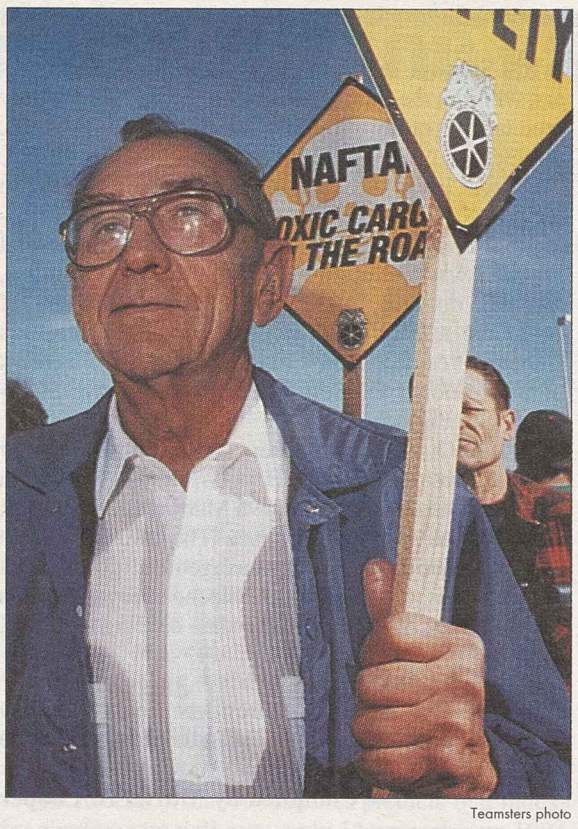
The Mexican government warned it would dispute the delay, which is expected to last six weeks, using NAFTA's dispute resolution mechanism.

The Transportation Department has stopped processing applications from Mexican carriers pending the result of new bilateral discussions.

In the Sprint case, the U.S. and Mexican labor secretaries agreed to call for a trinational investigation and a public hearing with regard to the company's closure of its La Conexion Familiar telemarketing office in San Francisco last year, one week before its workers were scheduled to vote in a union election.

"Closing or threatening to close plants and offices is one of the most common tactics to defeat union drives and deny workers their right to organize," said Communications Workers President Morton Bahr. "We're pleased that Labor Secretary (Robert B.) Reich and his counterparts in Mexico and Canada will be looking not only at the Sprint case, but going a step further to examine this pattern of behavior by large multinational corporations throughout the Americas."

In their eagerness to build on their free-trade dogma, House Republicans have approached Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) with a proposal for fast-track legislation limited to adding Chile to NAFTA, with extension of labor and environmental side agreements specifically excluded, even though Chile has indicated its willingness to accept them.



Teamsters photo

Protesters in Southern California seek to keep unsafe Mexican trucks out of the United States.

WORLD

Toymakers' code urged

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has demanded that U.S. toy companies take responsibility for unsafe working conditions in overseas factories that produce their toys.

ICFTU General Secretary Bill Jordan challenged major toy companies to sign a code of conduct guaranteeing that their products will not be produced under sweatshop conditions.

"Workers in these factories, 90 percent of whom are women, generally work for woefully inadequate wages, 10 hours a day six or seven days a week, in factories where basic health and safety procedures are rarely enforced," said Jordan. "Toy workers deserve more than this."

Korean unionist arrested

Kwon Young-kil, president of the newly formed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, has been arrested on charges of "third-party intervention" in an industrial dispute, days after his umbrella labor body was formed.

In letters to Korean President Kim Young-sam, Charles D. Gray, director of the AFL-CIO International Affairs Department, and Bill Jordan, ICFTU general secretary, called for Kwon's release, as well as for allowing the formation of new labor groups, with their rights to freedom of assembly and expression guaranteed.

"It is particularly disappointing that the first civilian government after two decades of military rule continues to harass and arrest democratic trade unionists — and does so using undemocratic, military-era labor laws that were designed to deny the rights of Korean workers," Gray said in calling for expedited labor-law reform.

Vietnam still a violator

Vietnam continues to violate international standards for worker rights and should be denied access to programs sponsored by the Overseas Private Investment Corp., labor and human rights groups say. OPIC is supposed to limit incentives for U.S. investors to countries in the process of adopting and implementing such standards.

"Workers in Vietnam have no freedom of association, no right to collective bargaining and no effective right to strike," said AFL-CIO chief economist Rudy Oswald during a Dec. 18 hearing. "The absence of these rights, the possibility of continued forced labor and the non-ratification of international instruments make Vietnam ineligible for OPIC benefits."

Vietnamese law and practice ensure domination by a "state-run trade union monopoly," added Pharis J. Harvey, executive director of the International Labor Rights Fund.

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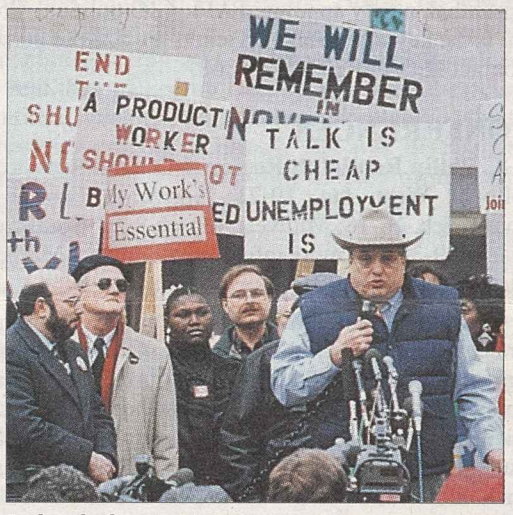
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Furloughed federal workers gather to protest shutdown. **See story, Page 3.**

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AFL-CIO NEWS

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Women stick together against hostile employer, fight for union at Somerset, Ky., plant. **See story, Page 2.**

CWA campaign helps bring Bell Atlantic in line

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Communications Workers were poised to complete a contract agreement with Bell Atlantic after five months of contentious bargaining, with negotiations on local issues remaining the only sticking point.

The company, which had resisted following the pattern established in negotiations with the other regional Bell operating companies, finally relented in the face of CWA's militant membership mobilization and a $7 million corporate campaign, which included a memorable TV ad that featured a bumbling subcontracted repairman named Larry.

"The tentative pact," said CWA President Morton Bahr, "meets our major goals in bargaining throughout the telecommunications industry — access to future jobs, a fair wage and benefit package, and protection of retiree health care — and is in line with the rest of the regional Bell companies."

Those contracts all included a wage package of 10 percent to 11 percent raises over three years, improvements in job security language and maintenance of retiree health benefits.

The parties had reached tentative agreement on the major national issues by Jan. 16, a CWA official said, but had agreed not to discuss the specifics of the pact pending the end of talks on the local issues.

Ratification, which could take up to a month, would not begin until the local issues are settled.

CWA represents approximately 37,000 Bell Atlantic employees in Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware and the District of Columbia who have been without a contract since last Aug. 5.

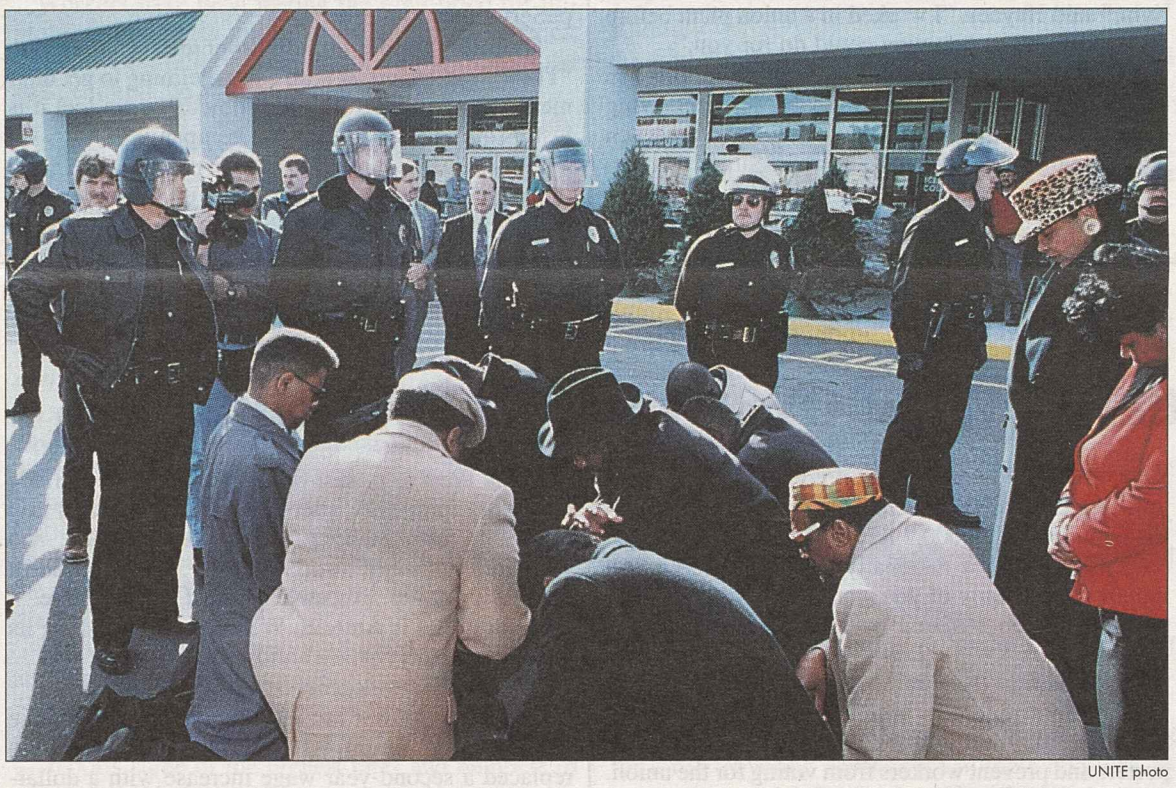
The Electrical Workers also represent Bell Atlantic workers — specifically, some 7,000 technicians in New Jersey.

CWA's campaign included extensive advertising in newspapers and on radio and television in Washington, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Charleston, W.Va., and Richmond, Va., along with USA Today,

Continued on Page 8

AT&T layoffs denounced

— See story, Page 8



UNITE photo

African-American ministers, allied with unionists as they protest discrimination against minority workers at a Kmart distribution center in Greensboro, N.C., confront a cordon of police with prayer. Labor and the civil rights community again joined hands in solidarity to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. **See story, Page 5.**

Budget battle again taken to the public

AFL-CIO ads, mailings assail cuts, tax breaks

By Mike Hall

The AFL-CIO launched another wave of advertising and grass-roots activity to generate public and political opposition to any budget deal that fails to protect important priorities for working families.

"Preserving the basic character of Medicare, continuing the Medicaid guarantee, providing federal support for education, and strong enforcement of worker protections and making large corporations pay their fair share of taxes are the issues at the center of the fight on the federal budget," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said in a letter to union presidents.

President Clinton's refusal to be blackmailed by the three-week government shutdown forced Republicans to reopen the federal government, at least through Jan. 26.

Some 260,000 federal employees returned to work Jan. 8 with back pay, while another 480,000 were paid for the work they were forced to perform for no or only partial pay during the shutdown.

Even though Clinton submitted a balanced budget proposal that protects Medicare, Medicaid, student and education loans, pensions from corporate raiders and worker programs, Republican congressional leaders broke off budget negotiations. They insisted on huge cuts in these programs, along with a massive tax cut to benefit the well-off and big business.

Sweeney noted that Clinton has stood firm in resisting GOP demands to cut these programs. The blame should be placed squarely "on the Republican leaders who are so intent on their radical corporate agenda that they are willing to hold government services and workers hostage," he said.

A week of radio and television ads began airing Jan. 17 in 27 congressional districts where Republican lawmakers voted to shut down the government. Most ads point out that the House members support the huge cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and college loans and favor tax breaks for big business and the rich.

"He (or she) went along with Newt Gingrich and shut down the government . . . but he (or she) kept taking

Continued on Page 3

Major ads desert Detroit scab papers

Strikers' newspaper reports stock dumping

By James B. Parks

Striking Detroit newspaper workers gained on three fronts as advertisers continued to desert the sinking Free Press and News, scab workers revealed false circulation reports by the publishing company and workers filed new unfair labor charges against the papers.

Meanwhile, the striker-produced newspaper, the Detroit Sunday Journal, reported that the top officials of Gannett and Knight-Ridder sold about $3 million worth of company stock shortly before revealing to Wall Street analysts that they had severely underestimated the losses caused by the strike. The Free Press is owned by Knight-Ridder and the News by Gannett.

The stock prices of both companies soared in November when Knight-Ridder Chief Executive Officer Tony Ridder said the strike would cost both companies $66 million. But in December, after selling $318,000 worth of stock, he announced the cost would be more than $100 million to each company. Gannett chief executive John Curley sold $2.6 million worth of stock in the same period, the Journal reported.

The Detroit Auto Dealers Association, sponsor of the Detroit Auto Show, announced it would not advertise in either of the papers. Wayne County, Detroit's home county, will no longer place ads in the paper and a large area publisher of discount grocery coupons has switched its ads to a suburban newspaper.

The loss of the Auto Show ads was particularly important, said Al Derey, chair of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, which represents the 2,000 strikers. "This is one of the premier business events of the year in this area," he said. "The fact is, premier businesses don't want to be associated with companies that break the law, attack their own workers and violate community standards."

The auto dealers last year spent about $100,000 in show-related advertising with the two papers, the unions said. The Free Press and News also were barred from having a corporate booth at the show, while the Sunday Journal was available in the show

Continued on Page 7

Women walk to right wrongs at Ky. plant

'Norma Raes' battle for union recognition

By Muriel H. Cooper

Linda Girdler watched from the window for two days. On the third day, she said she couldn't take it any longer.

Girdler left her assembly-line position and joined two of her co-workers picketing CDR Manufacturing in Somerset, Ky., in support of Barbara Haynes, who was fired after she began a union organizing drive.

"They wronged her," said Girdler. "I thought about it. We know they fired her for trying to start a union. They were my girls and what they did was not right. I joined them on the picket line and then I got fired."

By the week's end, nine women working at CDR were fired for supporting Haynes. They have been called the "Norma Raes" of Pulaski County, women who stood up to the company for dignity, a safe working environment and fair wages.

"I have never been shown this kind of friendship in all of my 29 years," said Haynes. "They understand that if the sexual harassment and disrespect happens to one of us, it can happen to all of us."

"These women are really courageous," said Tom Curley, an organizer for the Electrical Workers who has followed the campaign. "They said they were willing to risk their jobs because they were in this together."

The story of the women at CDR is a story heard around the country as workers face hostile employers in their fight for better conditions of work and fair treatment on the job.

"The reaction of CDR is typical of the kind of society we now live in," Curley said. Anti-union employers have been emboldened by antiquated labor laws and a Congress stacked against worker rights. Many employers will quickly announce they will hire "permanent replacements," knowing that workers are not able to put their jobs on the line to stand up for their rights, he said.



IBEW photo

Strikers leaving CDR after being denied entrance when their unfair labor practice strike ended are, from left, Linda Girdler, Mary Collier, Sue Hall, Barbara Haynes, Franka Johnson, Carrie Vanover and Nicole Adams.

CDR used every trick in the book to break the camaraderie among the women. New workers were brought in for higher wages at the plant, which has limited paid holidays and offers no health benefits. The women weren't allowed to talk to each other during their shifts and were locked in the building.

"There was only one person with a key that I knew of," said Haynes. "So I guess if a fire broke out, we would have to find him."

"I knew what was going on in the plant wasn't right," said Haynes. "I worked in a union plant before and I knew what the union could do for you."

The workers began an in-plant organizing drive in early September. They established an organizing committee and card authorizing campaign. Just when the campaign began to pick up momentum, Haynes was fired.

"We think this is a clear case of an unfair labor practice," said Brenda Steele, business manager of IBEW Local 101. "The women walked out for one day in support of Haynes and were told not to come back."

"When our boss, Mr. Curtis, called us in, he had a list with the seven women on my line and said, 'you are terminated.' He called us dogs and then said to the other two women that were called in that 'the rest of you dogs are also terminated.' "

The National Labor Relations Board has issued a complaint against CDR and, unless the recent government shutdown creates delays, plans to hold a hearing Jan. 24. The board also is going to seek an injunction against the company.

Now that the NLRB has issued the complaint, the workers inside the plant are beginning to see they do have rights, Curley said.

The women have been cheered by messages of support from union members on LaborNET, the AFL-CIO's electronic communications network on CompuServe.

"These are people we have never met," Girdler said. "They are strangers. It is so overwhelming to get their messages of support because sometimes we feel it is just us girls trying to fight the company."

"People are beginning to see that this is what it takes to turn it around," said Steele. "We told them it won't be easy, but when you walk back into CDR, it will be worth it."

A fund has been set up for the women. All contributions should be sent to CDR Justice Fund, c/o IBEW Local 101, 101 Tandy Ave., Somerset, Ky. 42501.

Teamsters sue America West over labor law violations

By David Kameras

The Teamsters joined with recently fired workers to file a class-action suit against America West Airlines Inc., charging the Phoenix-based carrier with violating federal labor laws and wrongfully terminating hundreds of employees involved in a union organizing drive.

IBT, which is seeking a permanent injunction to force America West to allow workers their right under the Railway Labor Act to choose their representation "free of coercion," said the carrier interfered with its latest campaign by telling employees they would lose a promised award-pay bonus if a union election took place, and all union buttons and stickers were banned from the workplace.

When that didn't work, the airline contracted out its heavy maintenance work and fired mechanics and maintenance staff, cutting by more than half the unit the IBT has targeted for organizing.

"America West shows its respect for our labor laws and thanks the community by illegally firing 500 $35,000-a-year machinists and contracting out their jobs to a company in Everett, Wash., where machinists make only $21,000," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said in a nationally televised speech last month. "How many of you want to fly in an airplane that's just been repaired by a $21,000 rookie mechanic?"

In a departure from past layoffs, the workers were fired without regard to seniority and recall rights, a move the IBT said is intended to punish union supporters and prevent workers from voting for the union. Workers were offered $10,000 payments and continued flight benefits through June in exchange for agreeing not to take legal action, an effort "to buy their silence," the IBT said.

The union has sponsored radio spots urging travelers not to fly America West, and workers have received support from a number of community and political leaders, including Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimza and Tempe Vice Mayor Dennis Cahill.

Just before Christmas, the Flight Attendants picketed America West to protest being cut out of the carrier's award-pay program "after taking pay cuts and pay freezes to help make America West a viable and profitable company," said Deborah Volpe, president of AFA's Master Executive Council at the airline.

"I guess this is America West's way of wishing its flight attendants 'happy holidays' " she said.

In other air developments:

- IBT mechanics last month rejected a tentative contract with Southwest Airlines that would have replaced a second-year wage increase with a dollar-match 401(k) plan. Talks are expected to resume "shortly."
- Blizzard conditions on the East Coast delayed resumption of talks between United Parcel Service and IBT mechanics, who rejected a six-year pact last month.
- Bad weather also affected the negotiation schedule between the Air Line Pilots and Federal Express, which suffered a holiday season slowdown after financial results that disappointed industry analysts.

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Labor defends rule to protect worker safety

Business lobby attacks ergonomics proposal

By Colleen M. O'Neill

The AFL-CIO soundly denounced the latest ploy by business interests to halt the effort to create an ergonomics standard to protect workers from injuries due to repetitive motion.

An "analysis" by an industry coalition "is the latest effort in its ongoing campaign to use power, money and distortions to keep the government from protecting workers from crippling repetitive strain injuries and illnesses," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

Sweeney was responding to a report from the industry-backed National Coalition on Ergonomics, led by the American Trucking Association, National Association of Manufacturers and United Parcel Service.

"This is not about science," he said. "It's about industry trying to rid itself of all regulations and gut job safety protections."

Workers have been paying the high price for improper ergonomics controls through back injuries, tendonitis and other crippling problems leading, in the most extreme, to surgery and/or total disability.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' most recent figures — based on employers' own reports — indicate that ergonomic injuries and illnesses account for more than one-third of all serious workplace injuries and illnesses — more than 730,000 in 1993 — and the numbers are steadily increasing. In fact, cumulative trauma disorders have risen 770 percent over the last decade, and workers' compensation costs associated with musculoskeletal injuries total more than $20 million per year.

Despite that, the business coalition has released a report criticizing the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's draft proposed standard.

In short, the industry group claims the agency "manipulated scientific data to justify a regulation." Proponents of an ergonomics standard questioned why the group would come out, guns blazing, at an early draft of a rule.

"This is one of the grossest distortions of the truth and demonstrations of corporate irresponsibility seen in a long time," Sweeney said. "The trucking and courier industry — which is a leader in this coalition — reports some of the highest rates and numbers of ergonomic injuries and illnesses.

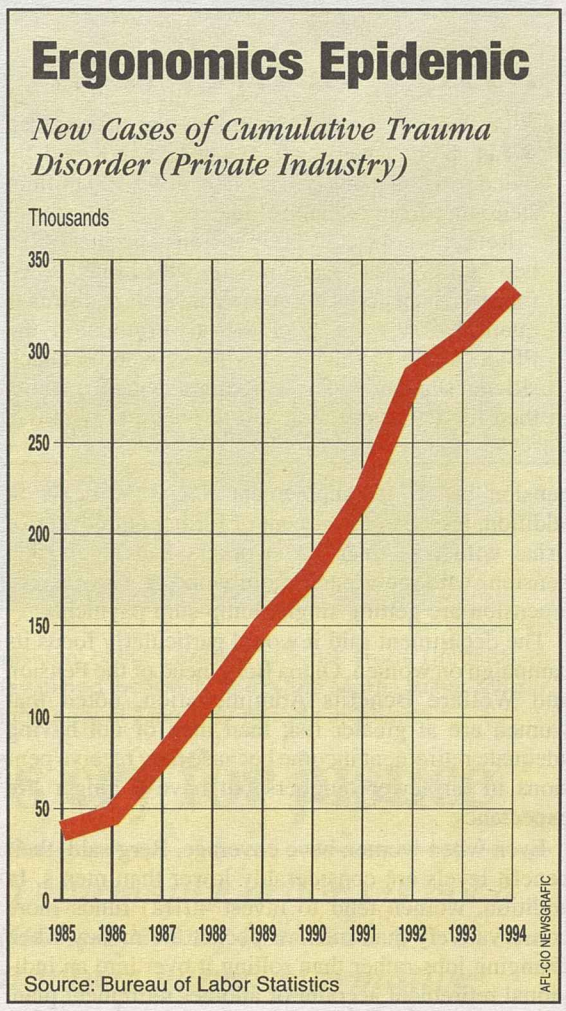
"For these employers to claim that there is no problem and no need for an OSHA regulation to control ergonomic hazards is simply incredible. Are they trying to tell the hundreds of thousands of workers who are disabled by these injuries each year that their pain and suffering doesn't exist and that ergonomic hazards don't need to be controlled?

"Many employers like Ford, GM, Chrysler, IBP, Masland Industries and others have recognized that ergonomic injuries and illnesses are a serious problem, and have instituted comprehensive control measures to prevent them," he noted. "It's shameful that UPS, the American Trucking Association, the National Association of Manufacturers and others in the coalition have decided to spend millions of dollars to stop OSHA from protecting American workers instead of acting responsibly to help to control ergonomic hazards."

The move is the latest in a series of steps designed to stymie the release of an ergonomics rule. The coalition was instrumental in lobbying the Republican-led Congress to block publication of the proposed rule last summer.

In fact, language to block OSHA from even gathering information to help in a rulemaking was attached to the Labor/Health and Human Services appropriations bill.

Workers and their representatives have long fought for a rule covering ergonomics in the workplace. In one instance, the California AFL-CIO filed suit to force that state to follow through on a mandate to adopt an ergonomics standard by Dec. 1, 1996; a draft was released last Dec. 1, with hearings scheduled on the measure this month.



Overtime assault moves through key House panel

By David Kameras

House Republicans intent on turning the clock back on worker rights moved a step closer to their goal when a key panel approved a measure that would scrap current overtime provisions.

The House Economic and Educational Opportunities subcommittee on work force protections violated its own name when it passed a substitute version of H.R. 2391 offered by Chairman Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.) to give employers the option of substituting time off for overtime pay when workers exceed 40 hours a week.

Democrats said the legislation could eliminate the incentive for employers to honor the 40-hour week, one of the key achievements by labor in the last century, and subject workers to coercion and discriminatory treatment. "If an employer is able to give preference to employees opting for comp time, the choice between comp time and overtime pay is no longer truly voluntary, even though the employee has knowingly and voluntarily accepted comp time," said Rep. Major R. Owens (D-N.Y.), the panel's ranking minority member.

"Unless the law is carefully constructed to discourage violations, the provision of comp time becomes one more means by which employers will cheat workers," he said.

"It is human nature for us to expect that, if an employer would rather have the employees take the overtime as comp time, that the employer in many cases may be prone to favor those employees who would choose the comp time over those who would choose cash," added Rep. Robert E. Andrews (D-N.J.). "We need to have an enforceable, practical mechanism to protect employees against that sort of discrimination."

AFL-CIO economist John Zalusky noted that employees with multiple employers or in "work-at-will" situations would be particularly vulnerable to abuse, and would likely see a longer workweek without commensurate pay. For example, employers would be able to demand 60 hours one week, offer 20 hours comp time the next, then substitute straight-time pay when work isn't available.

"For the vast majority of workers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, cash today is far more important than a promise of time off next year," Zalusky said. "Congressman Ballenger's claim that this is a family-friendly way to work is bogus on the face of it."

In other action, the subcommittee agreed to legislation that would weaken compensation protections for workers who drive to a job site in a company-owned vehicle, and would remove FLSA requirements on operators of residential home-like facilities to care for abused children.

Government shutdown affected many innocent Americans

Continued from Page 1

his (her) own paychecks and perks," the ads say.

An AFL-CIO national television ad running on CNN slams the Gingrich budget plan and the forced government shutdown while urging viewers to "tell the Republicans to stop the political games."

Along with the ads, the federation sent some 350,000 pieces of direct mail to union members living in targeted states and districts.

The mailing asks union households to call their lawmakers and urge them to protect working family programs from cuts being made to give tax breaks to the wealthy. Phone bank follow-ups also are planned.

Legislative Action Committees in many of the same districts are attempting to schedule meetings with members of Congress.

Grass-roots activities included a rally and picket line set up around Emerson Electric headquarters in St. Louis, in a protest coinciding with a three-day tour by Republican senators.

"Many of these freshmen senators are pursuing the same unfair tax and trade programs that have inflicted so much harm on working people," said Joe Middleton of the Electronic Workers, which had represented workers at an Emerson plant that was closed.

"Victims of plant closings and other hard-pressed working people would have plenty to say to these senators if they could get at them," he said.

Congress returns to Washington Jan. 22, four days before the continuing resolution funding the government runs out. It appears that Gingrich and other Republican leaders have backed off their strategy of forcing another government shutdown to win a budget on their terms.

Instead, they may use their majority in both houses to pass appropriations bills — six of 13 remain for FY 1996 — that fund programs they favor, while shutting down programs they have been unable to kill legislatively — such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the National Labor Relations Board and housing and environmental programs.

Union members, community activists and other groups have dogged House Speaker Newt Gingrich along several stops on his fund-raising tour for House Republicans. In Walnut Creek, Calif., some 150 people demonstrated Jan. 12 outside a $200-per-person breakfast fund-raiser for Rep. Bill Baker.

On Jan. 16, a coalition of community groups, seniors organizations, unions, civil rights groups and religious groups protested outside three fund raisers Gingrich attended. In Detroit, 1,000 people turned out to protest a Gingrich appearance at the Economic Club.

One message the demonstrators delivered to Gingrich is that the shutdown hurt many innocent people:

- State unemployment offices around the nation were shut down and applications could not be processed.
- Federal prison guards were forced to work without pay.
- Programs such as Meals on Wheels for seniors, foster care, adoption services and other essential programs were idled.
- Veterans hospitals were not able to provide full service.
- The Centers for Disease Control could not track the current flu outbreak or other diseases.
- Working Americans endured a backlog of more than 20,000 unprocessed mortgage applications.

Clearinghouse helps sort out pension problems

By Colleen M. O'Neill

American workers concerned about having secure funds for their retirements have some allies working on their behalf.

The Pension Education Clearinghouse, created last year, brings together many groups interested in financial security issues for retirees. The AFL-CIO, AFT, Electronic Workers, Teamsters and the National Council of Senior Citizens are among the participants.

The clearinghouse is mounting a campaign to educate Americans about income needs during retirement, pensions and the need to plan early for retirement. It is cataloging publications and other consumer education materials about pensions and profit-sharing plans.

The attention on pensions and planning for retirement comes at a crucial time for American workers, as private pensions are becoming more rare and Congress is advancing proposals that would threaten retirement income.

Specifically, Congress is working toward gaining President Clinton's signature on an initiative to allow corporate executives to spend excess pension funds at their own discretion.

The U.S. Department of Labor last year announced a retirement savings education campaign similar to the clearinghouse, under the theme "Save! Your retirement clock is ticking," and kicked off by Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich and Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin. But unions realize that security means more than saving plans.

"I applaud the administration's encouragement to U.S. workers to save for their retirement," said IUE President William Bywater after the kickoff. "A regular plan of saving for a rainy day is smart, but workers need good-paying jobs first if they are going to be able to save.

"A good habit of saving will never take the place of a good job with a good pension plan and Social Security — each of which are threatened today by the Republican-controlled Congress," Bywater said. "That's what threatens the retirement security of U.S. workers today."

In a July 1995 report, the DoL noted that fewer than half of today's over-65 retirees had received a private pension benefit to supplement Social Security. In addition, less than 25 percent of former employees of firms with less than 100 workers had received a pension, while more and more workers who receive a pension are getting single, lump-sum payments.

The department said it would particularly focus its campaign on women. Olena Berg, head of the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, noted that women are at greater risk than men of not having adequate retirement income because they receive pensions in far fewer numbers but have a longer life expectancy.

Even when women have coverage, Berg said, their benefit levels are considerably lower than men's. In addition, women tend to invest 401(k) funds more conservatively than men, or pocket the money when changing jobs rather than rolling it over into an individual retirement account or another retirement plan.

Raiders of the lost pensions

The need to take care of one's retirement needs is particularly obvious given the mood on Capitol Hill. Legislation put forth as part of budget reconciliation packages in the House and Senate would make it easier for companies to withdraw excess pension assets.

Congress passed legislation in 1990 to deter such pension raids after a spate of them in the 1980s skimmed off $20 billion, as companies sought to pay off bills incurred during takeovers.

Under current law, employers may withdraw excess assets from their defined benefit plans tax free if those assets are used to fund specific tax code accounts. One of the legislative initiatives would have allowed that money to be used for any purpose, while another was slightly more restrictive.

The president vetoed the provision in early December, but it remains part of Congress's version of the budget reconciliation bill.

Reich said in October that an examination of pension plans showed that anywhere from $75 billion to $105 billion was at stake under the proposed reversions.

He also cautioned that pension valuations fluctuate. As an example, Reich said, Eastern Airline's pension plan was 150 percent funded in 1983 and 87 percent funded in 1989, a year before going into bankruptcy — when there were $450 million in claims against the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp., the government's guarantor of pension funds.

Other companies whose pensions had to be bailed out include Pan American World Airways, Wheeling-Pittsburgh, Allis-Chalmers and White Motors.

A listing of companies with the 50 largest underfunded pension plans put forth by the PBGC last month includes Ravenswood Aluminium Corp., Bridgestone/Firestone, United Parcel Service, Borg-Warner Automotive, Navistar International, Greyhound Lines, Scott Paper and American Home Products.

PBGC settlement yields $100 million

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. announced Jan. 8 that nearly 40,000 retirees covered by failed pension plans will share nearly $100 million stemming from a legal settlement.

Retirees in some 11,000 pension plans that failed between 1976 and 1981 initially were turned down for pension benefits because their funds had stricter qualification rules than the government's; the PBGC made payments to workers who met such stricter standards. Those retirees denied benefits then filed a class-action suit to regain the funds.

Under the settlement, the agency will make back payments with interest to workers who met federal standards, but not their employers' standards. Retirees with 10 or more years of service, or their survivors, will receive about 80 percent of the benefits they did not receive at the time. Those with five to nine years of service will get a slightly smaller amount.

Retirees who think they qualify for payments can check by calling 800/316-8857, a number set up by lawyers who filed the case.

JOB SAFETY

Exposure limits to change

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration plans to begin reviewing all 428 substances for which it has set permissible exposure limits with an eye toward setting revised limits.

The PELs for toxic chemicals have not been changed since their adoption in 1971. The agency attempted to revise them under a single standard for general industry in 1989, but that was overturned in 1992 as part of a lawsuit involving the AFL-CIO and affiliated unions.

OSHA expects to begin publishing proposed revisions in the Federal Register this summer.

LIUNA poll revealing

A survey of workers by the Laborers shows that harassment, assaults and violence on construction sites may be more common than has been reported.

The majority — 87.6 percent — of LIUNA members surveyed said their workplaces are safe, but 37.9 percent reported having witnessed an assault and violent or harassing behavior. More than half of the incidents were classified as harassment by respondents, while nearly half of those polled indicated witnessing both verbal harassment and physical assaults and 11.5 percent said they had seen only physical assaults.

Nearly 60 percent of respondents said they experience emotional stress as a result of these incidents.

Safety conference set

The 6th Annual Construction Safety Conference, "Target Zero '96," has been planned for Feb. 20-22.

Co-sponsors of the event, to be held in Rosemont, Ill., include the Construction Safety Council, the Center to Protect Workers' Rights and the Chicago AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades.

Registration and other information is available from the Construction Safety Council at 708/449-0550.

Family leave law gets good reviews

Workers benefit with little detriment to employers

American workers and their employers have reported strong usage — and little detrimental effect — of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Two surveys released by the Family and Medical Leave Commission late last year show that both men and women are using the leave benefits, with men making up 42 percent of leave-takers and women 58 percent. The average length of leave was about 37 days.

Male respondents were more likely to use leave for their own illness; female respondents were more likely to take leave to care for seriously ill family members.

The FMLA, the first legislation signed by President Clinton after he took office, went into effect in August 1993. It requires that businesses with 50 or more employees grant workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to attend to their own serious health condition, the serious illness of a child, parent or spouse or the birth or adoption of a child.

Slightly less than 50 percent of American workers employed in the private sector are eligible to take leave under the law.

Approximately 90 percent of employers affected by the FMLA reported no costs or very little costs associated with administering the act, the commission noted, with more than 85 percent of firms reporting "no noticeable effect" on employee turnover, absences or productivity.

In other survey results:

- Two-thirds of companies reported expanding their leave policies because of the FMLA.
- Approximately 16.8 percent of the employed population (90 million Americans) took a leave from work for one of the reasons covered by FMLA (but not all worked for an FMLA-covered firm).
- The most common reason was for the employees' own serious health condition.
- The majority of those using leave for a medical reason took off work two weeks or less.
- Some 3.4 percent of all employed people surveyed needed to take a leave for reasons covered by FMLA but did not; the most common reason was because they could not afford it.

"The results indicate that family-friendly benefits support American workers and are good for American business," said Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich. The surveys provide "scientific confirmation of what we have seen through our administration of this new workplace benefit."

"This act really points out the best of corporate America and U.S. workers," he said. "Given the opportunity to provide this important family benefit, most employers have embraced it and helped their employees use it. And clearly, it is a benefit that American workers have not abused but found very, very helpful in times of health or medical crisis."

The report debunks "a lot of Chicken Littles," opponents who claimed FMLA would hurt productivity and increase employer burdens, asserted Sen. Christopher J. Dodd (D-Conn.), the law's author and chairman of the commission.

"This report proves just the opposite," he said. "The sky isn't falling. The law is making a significant difference in the lives of American families . . . with no real impact on businesses."

The Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan conducted a random nationwide telephone survey of 2,254 employees, while the Maryland-based Westat research firm surveyed 1,206 private-sector employers. Both studies took place over an 18-month period beginning in January 1994.

However, the commission's final report on the law, which was tentatively scheduled for release on Jan. 1, has been pushed back at least until mid-February by the nearly one-month government shutdown. Acting Director Ann Bookman said the commission had made significant headway in pulling together the report before work was halted.

— Colleen M. O'Neill



Photo by Peggy Cozart

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka links arms with Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson and William Lucy, AFSCME secretary-treasurer and president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, as they joined the family of the late Martin Luther King Jr. in the annual King Day parade in Atlanta.

Unions renew King's cry for justice

Workers celebrated the 67th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birth the same way King himself lived: speaking out and marching for justice.

After addressing a rally at King's church in Atlanta, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson marched in the annual parade to honor the slain civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Two days before, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the annual labor-management-government breakfast that it will take a "larger, stronger, smarter labor movement and a revived civil rights movement" to solve the nation's top problem — stagnant wages.

"The budget battle in Washington isn't a fight about dollars, it's a fight about who gets the dollars," he said.

"American workers are running out of money and running out of hope," he said. "And what of those American workers who never really shared in the prosperity in the first place — the women and minorities who couldn't ride a rising tide because they didn't even have a boat?

"Now comes American business to declare that affirmative action, the one vehicle they can use for improving their living standard, is somehow un-American. And they want to destroy the safety nets for those who have been totally left behind."

Congressional Republicans are determined to return to an era where states' rights reigned supreme, Sweeney said. But states' rights held "this country in virtual captivity for 200 years while black men and women were being held in absolute captivity. It's time for us to tell our elected officials that as long as there is breath left in our bodies, we will not go back, we will not return to those awful days in our history."

> *"(Affirmative action) is not a quota system; it is not a numbers game. Affirmative action has advanced fairness, not favoritism."*
>
> **— AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney**

Affirmative action, Sweeney said, "is not a quota system; it is not a numbers game. Affirmative action has advanced fairness, not favoritism."

Sweeney noted that King was killed fighting for the right of Memphis, Tenn., sanitation workers to join AFSCME, leading to the first memorandum of understanding covering city workers in the South. He praised current Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell for becoming only the second southern mayor in history to sign such an agreement.

Sweeney received a distinguished service award from the King Center. Laborers President Arthur Coia and UNITE President Jay Mazur received social responsibility awards.

Meanwhile, the Maryland AFSCME released a survey of state employees showing they face some of the same problems the Memphis sanitation workers faced in 1968.

The solutions to these problems can best be addressed through collective bargaining rights for the workers, said William Hudson Jr., AFSCME's executive director for Maryland. Gov. Parris Glendening (D) has made gaining comprehensive collective bargaining for state workers a goal of his administration.

— James B. Parks

PBS biography celebrates Randolph

In celebration of Black History Month, public television will air "A. Philip Randolph: For Jobs and Freedom," a 90-minute film documentary produced by WETA, Feb. 2 at 9 p.m. on PBS stations nationwide.

Randolph, an AFL-CIO vice president and founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, believed that improving the economic position of African-Americans was the key to advancing their civil rights.

Besides winning the first national contract for a black union, Randolph led the fight against legal discrimination in government and the military and helped to organize the 1963 March on Washington movement. The documentary analyzes the impact of Randolph's leadership and accomplishments — from his youth in Florida through his formative years in New York to his leadership in the labor and civil rights movements.

Some of the interviewees include former AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland; Maida Springer-Kemp, labor organizer during the 1930s who worked with Randolph throughout much of his life; Timuel Black, who worked with Randolph at the Negro American Labor Council; and Rachelle Horowitz, who was an assistant to Bayard Rustin and involved in organizing the 1963 March on Washington.

The Steelworkers and the Pittsburgh chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute co-sponsored an advance screening of the documentary on Jan. 19 at the union's headquarters.

"Until the day he died at age 90 in 1979, Randolph never gave up his vision of social progress," Leon Lynch, USWA vice president and chairman of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, told the audience. "In his final years, he continued to speak out, defending members of my own union as thousands fought to win their first union contract at the shipyards in Newport News, Va."

Check local listings for the PBS station in your area.

Georgia fight pits industry against poor

Activists say kaolin miners should pay up

By James B. Parks

A coalition of organized labor, civil rights and environmental groups launched a drive to bring justice to the politically powerful kaolin industry.

Kaolin, a white chalky clay, is used to make glossy magazine paper, industrial ceramics, toothpaste, china and medicine. More than 88 percent of the world's kaolin is in Georgia, where the industry is controlled by six Georgia companies that unions say pay impoverished white and black landowners as little as five cents a ton for the material, while selling it for $700 a ton.

Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.), who represents many of the poor landowners, has asked the Justice Department to launch an antitrust investigation into the kaolin industry.

She also has called for a severance tax, like that paid by coal companies, which kaolin companies would pay to compensate Georgia counties for removing the chalk from the ground. She also has demanded that the industry repair damage to the environment caused by its strip mining.

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson told a Jan. 14 candlelight vigil and rally in Atlanta that the kaolin fight — and the effort to unseat McKinney — are examples of the need to continue fighting for justice for minorities.

McKinney, whose district boundaries were overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in its landmark redistricting decision, has been targeted by the Republicans and the kaolin industry for her outspokenness on behalf of the poor.

The Republican leadership in Congress "would see us turn back the clock and retreat to the days of yesteryear," Chavez-Thompson said. "They would like to limit and stop the progress that minorities have made in our legislative houses and in the halls of Congress. They would like to take away our ability to represent our communities. . . That is unfair and it is certainly unjust."

It's up to labor and civil rights groups to "light the way for those who need to be shown the way to a better society," she said. That includes "those in corporate America who continue to gain their profits on the backs of the American workers, but repay them with massive layoffs and major downsizing, no health care benefits or pension benefits, part-time work and minimum wages.

"But these same corporations find a way to reward their CEOs with lucrative profit-sharing plans, million-dollar bonuses and golden parachutes at the same time they are reducing their work forces," she said.

"There is something wrong with a system when the CEO gets a raise and the workers get layoff notices" or "when workers who have helped build these companies, with their hard work, their sweat and their dedication do not receive their fair share of the profits," Chavez-Thompson said.

The AFL-CIO and its leadership "are soldiers with you in the battle for justice," she told the rally. "We will not give up until we have won fairness and justice in every workplace, board room, school room and legislative hall in America."

Other rally speakers included William Lucy, AFSCME secretary-treasurer and president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; Gloria Johnson, Electronic Workers vice president and president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women; UNITE Executive Vice President Bruce Raynor and Vice President Evie Dubrow; Richard Womack, AFL-CIO civil rights director; and Atlanta AFL-CIO President Stewart Acuff.

The labor groups supporting the kaolin campaign include UNITE; UAW; Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees; Service Employees; Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; Steelworkers; AFT; Postal Workers; Communications Workers; Electrical Workers; IUE; Machinists; Carpenters; Laborers; CBTU; and CLUW.

COURTS

UAW fights Cat work rules

The UAW is continuing its fight to get restrictive, coercive temporary work rules at Caterpillar thrown out, even though the company has agreed not to make the rules permanent.

The temporary standards, which severely limit the workers' free speech rights, currently are in effect in eight recently struck plants. If Caterpillar disciplines workers "using this type of broad gag rule, they do so at their own peril," said Glenn Zipp, director of the National Labor Relations Board's Region 33 in Peoria, Ill., referring to the temporary standards.

The NLRB asked an administrative law judge to dismiss part of the unfair labor practice charges against Caterpillar after the company agreed to relax the permanent workplace conduct standards.

The motion was filed after Caterpillar modified its proposed standards governing workplace conduct and discipline procedures to eliminate many of the broad bans against discussing the 17-month UAW strike against the company.

The UAW filed unfair labor practice charges against the company in December when Caterpillar announced it would establish permanent and temporary conduct standards after the union ended its strike.

Strikers ordered reinstated

A federal judge in Connecticut has ordered a Uniroyal division to reinstate workers who walked out after the company unilaterally changed its vacation policy.

Judge Robert N. Chatigny ruled in Hoffman vs. Polycast Technology Division that the company violated labor law by not allowing Teamsters who struck in June 1994 to return to work.

After contract negotiations broke down in May 1994, Polycast implemented the terms of its last offer. One month later it changed the longstanding policy that workers could go on vacation between June 1 and Dec. 31 for a one-month period that coincided with a plantwide shutdown in July.

Two months later, both sides agreed to end the disputed vacation policy and allow the workers to return to work. But Polycast reneged on the deal.

UFW wins boycott ruling

A state appeals court has ruled that grape growers cannot prosecute the Farm Workers for promoting a boycott of California table grapes or seek monetary damages.

"It's a great victory for farm workers," UFW President Arturo Rodriquez said. "Ironically, grape growers have consistently claimed the grape boycott has never been effective. Yet these same growers wanted the state to force the UFW to pay them millions of dollars in damages caused by the grape boycott."

The California Table Grape Commission, a state agency dominated by appointees of former Republican Gov. George Deukmejian, had ruled against the UFW in the case. In appealing the ruling, the union argued successfully that a state agency cannot use public funds to prosecute a private party, such as the UFW, on behalf of another private party, the grape growers, who have a financial stake in the outcome.

NFL antitrust suit heard

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to use a suit against the National Football League to decide whether unions can file antitrust claims against employers who impose salaries after a bargaining impasse.

The court will consider whether to reinstate a $30.3 million judgment for rookie players after the NFL arbitrarily set their salaries in 1989.

The case involves the league's 1989 plan to create developmental squads and pay the rookie players $1,000 a week. Ordinarily, players' salaries are set through individual negotiation.

After the Professional Athletes rejected the proposal, the team owners declared an impasse and imposed the salary cap. A group of rookie players filed a class-action antitrust lawsuit challenging the plan.

A federal judge ruled for the players, who were awarded $30.3 million in damages after a jury trial. But the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit threw out the award last March.

The appeal is being supported by the Screen Actors Guild, the unaffiliated Major League Baseball Players Association and the National Hockey League Players Association.



Jocelyn Sherman/UFW

More than 50 Farm Workers met with California Agricultural Relations Board Regional Director Lawrence Alderete after picketing outside the ALRB office in Visalia. The workers, laid off by CP Meilland after voting for the union, asked the NLRB to seek a court injunction ordering the company to allow the workers to go back to their jobs and to certify the election results, so the UFW can begin negotiations with the company.

IAFF fights bias in Mississippi

Union confronts council over anti-union animus

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Fire Fighters President Alfred K. Whitehead told the Jackson City Council that Mississippi's so-called "right-to-work" status doesn't give the city the right to discriminate against union members.

"We've documented numerous instances where fire fighters were arbitrarily disciplined, transferred and demoted in rank because they belonged to the union," Whitehead said in an appearance before the council. "We've obtained evidence that the chief officers in the department, on strict orders from the fire chief, have attempted to coerce fire fighters into quitting the union."

Whitehead said that the people of Jackson mistakenly have been led to believe that this is a racial issue. "But both black and white fire fighters are being discriminated against because they are union members," he declared.

"If this isn't resolved, I can assure you that we're not going away," he declared. "We'll be coming back to Jackson. We will mobilize the labor community and bring civil rights leaders with us to call attention to the violation of our members' constitutional rights."

Whitehead said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka has agreed to go to Mississippi to support the fire fighters. "We'll have a full-scale labor rally and give the city of Jackson the kind of notoriety that it doesn't want."

Also addressing the council along with Whitehead were Mississippi AFL-CIO President Neal Fowler, 14th District IAFF Vice President Danny Todd and Tony Davis, president of the Jackson Fire Fighters.

Todd cited a litany of unfair labor incidents, including a 32-year veteran fire fighter who was told to get out of the union or face demotion, and a young fire fighter whose paperwork for a job transfer was lost after he rebuffed a chief's demand that he get out of the union.

With his two daughters at his side, 19-year veteran fire fighter Davis told of the two years of hell he went through after he was wrongfully fired by Fire Chief Joseph Donovan.

"I had to sell property to remain solvent until I was reinstated to my job by court order," he said. "I was accused of workers' compensation fraud and I was called a paranoid schizophrenic. But the chief lied, and two years later it was determined that I told the truth."

One of the studies, conducted by Dr. James Harvey of Jackson State University, outlined 23 recommendations for changes in the department, including the firing of the fire chief.

As a result of that study and numerous other incidents, City Councilwoman Marcia Weaver introduced a motion calling on the council to take a vote of "no confidence" in Donovan.

The union recently won a discrimination lawsuit in Westminster, Calif., where the mayor, two city council members, the city manager and the fire chief were found guilty of conspiring to violate the civil rights of union officers and members. The jury awarded the union fire fighters more than $2.4 million in damages.

"I'm sure your city attorney can tell you all about that case," Whitehead told the council.

The union represents some 175 fire fighters in Jackson.

35,000 N.Y. building workers strike

Some 35,000 Service Employees responsible for the posh accommodations of downtown New York offices struck more than 1,300 buildings Jan. 4, refusing to give in to demands for concessions.

"Although the union has bargained in good faith to win a badly needed wage increase for our members, the employers have declined to make a realistic offer," SEIU Local 32B-32J President Gus Bevona said. "We weren't looking to strike, but now that management has forced us to hit the bricks, we have the determination, the discipline and the staying power to win."

The building service industry employers were demanding substantial givebacks. Bevona characterized their demand for a two-tier wage system as a "prelude to replacing long-term office cleaners and other workers with low-paid strangers." The low-wage replacements would have "the keys to virtually every office in the city," he added.

The union has been engaged in negotiations with building service industry employers — including the Realty Advisory Board, an association of building owners and managers — to arrive at an acceptable agreement to replace the three-year master contract that expired Dec. 31, 1995.

The strike by cleaners, porters, handypersons, elevator operators and others has had a major impact on essential services. Jobs such as trash removal, provisions for heat and hot water, maintenance, snow removal, deliveries, elevator operation and cleaning were trivial to the building tenants prior to the strike.

The employers don't want to pay a porter $29,000 a year, Bevona told reporters at a Jan. 11 press conference. "I am proud that our members earn a livable wage, that they have comprehensive health insurance and other benefits that make them self-sufficient, productive citizens of this city."

The landlords want to make the union members work for poverty wages that would require supplemental welfare benefits to survive, Bevona said.

Substantial increases were needed to maintain existing benefits for health insurance. But a modest wage increase and a 10 percent increase in productivity resulted in a no-cost contract for the landlords, said Bevona.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

USWA drive at Bridgestone keeps rolling

With talks resuming, workers demonstrate

The Steelworkers resumed talks with Bridgestone/Firestone as the union prepared to escalate its campaign to win a fair contract.

The latest round of activity began with a demonstration Jan. 10 by about 150 union members outside three locations in Chicago — the Sears headquarters building, the Japanese consulate and the Sumi Tomi bank branch. The bank is a major Bridgestone/Firestone financial backer. Most Bridgestone/Firestone stores are located inside or near Sears stores.

Workers also held candlelight vigils at the homes of operations managers of the five plants affected by the recent strike and at U.S. corporate headquarters in Nashville, Tenn., said Dewitt Walton of the USWA corporate campaign staff. During the upcoming weeks, they will hold vigils at the homes of human resources directors and other company officials, he said.

The union also plans to conduct informational leafleting at trade shows, auto shows and any other venues where Bridgestone/Firestone products are displayed, Walton said.

Meanwhile, negotiators for both sides returned to the table Jan. 16 after a month-long recess for the holidays. The talks started again Nov. 6 after a six-month lull, spurred by the intense efforts of the USWA to bring the dispute to national and international attention. The talks had recessed Dec. 13 for the holidays.

Prior to the recess, some of the workers completed a three-country, six-day European tour to Belgium, Spain and Italy. The solidarity and cooperation shown by the European workers was a "perfect example of the international trade union movement dealing with a multinational corporation," Walton said.

While the workers were in Europe, USWA President George Becker met Dec. 5 with Bridgestone/Firestone President Yoichiro Kaizaki in Tokyo.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions adopted a resolution Dec. 6 condemning Bridgestone/Firestone management for its anti-worker policies in the United States. The resolution also called on workers around the world to boycott Bridgestone/Firestone products.

About 4,200 Bridgestone/Firestone employees in five states, formerly Rubber Workers, suspended their strike against the giant Japanese tire manufacturer May 22 and switched strategies in an effort for a new contract. They walked out July 12, 1994, almost three months after their contract had expired. The strike was the longest in tire industry history. Some 1,000 of the workers who were "permanently replaced" still have not returned to work.



AFL-CIO photo

A giant marionette of Mother Jones helped to deliver the union message at Bridgestone's European headquarters in Brussels.



Photo by Rebecca Cook

Detroit newspaper strike supporter Margaret Kardjoff sells the Sunday Journal in suburban Royal Oak, Mich.

Repentant Detroit scabs tell of ordeal

Continued from Page 1

press room and in a UAW-Ford booth inside the exhibit hall.

The auto dealers also agreed to include a one-page fact sheet about the strike, prepared by the CNU, in the official press packet.

Valassis Coupons, a major publisher of discount coupons in the Detroit area, switched its ads from the Free Press and News to the Macomb Daily, a suburban paper, according to Crain's Detroit Business.

"Valassis is finding out what many other advertisers have discovered," Derey said. "The Detroit newspapers simply can't deliver the same level of service now as they did last year, when our members were working there with a signed labor agreement."

Wayne County commissioners voted to halt all advertising in the two papers and directed the county executive to take steps to stop sales of the papers in all county facilities.

"These losses are simply unnecessary," Derey said. "If newspaper executives will come to the table for good-faith bargaining, we can reach an agreement that's fair to all sides."

Four of the scab workers imported to work at the papers during the strike claimed in a news conference that they were held hostage by the papers, being forced to work long hours without breaks or days off. They also disputed the company's claims that circulation is strong.

"Basically, we were held hostage," said Kimberly Bailey from Des Moines, Iowa, who came to Detroit with her brother Dan to deliver papers. The company recruited workers from out of town, she said, and provided them with round-trip air tickets to come to Detroit.

"Once we got here, they took our return ticket, and they wouldn't give it back until they decided they were done with us." She said she was forced to work as long as 16 hours a day, seven days a week. "Sometimes I'd catch myself falling asleep while I was driving. It wasn't safe."

Bill Prestage from Hattiesburg, Miss., who worked for a Gannett paper in Mississippi several years, said he often was given more than 1,000 papers to deliver in a day. "We delivered those papers until we couldn't do it any more, and the rest would get trashed. That kind of thing happened all the time."

Prestage's charges were confirmed by the public works director of suburban Farmington Hills, who wrote the newspapers Dec. 5 to complain that carriers were dropping off undelivered bundles of newspapers in the city's drop-off recycling center in violation of the local laws.

These revelations come after the striking unions filed another unfair labor practice charge against the papers with the National Labor Relations Board. The latest filing charges the Free Press and News broke the law by insisting that striking workers have been "permanently replaced" by newly hired employees. Company executives made their statement during a bargaining session held in Mayor Dennis Archer's office and to the media afterwards. Archer, Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Cardinal Adam Maida had requested the Dec. 20 meeting.

It is illegal to hire or threaten to hire "permanent replacements" for workers engaged in an unfair labor practice strike. The NLRB has already filed unfair labor practice complaints against the papers for failing to bargain in good faith.

The striking unions also reached a settlement of charges filed against them by the newspapers. In the settlement agreement, the unions reaffirmed their longstanding policy of not endorsing or condoning any violence or illegal activity as part of the strike.

"We've made this same statement many times since the strike began," Derey said. Maybe the settlement, negotiated by the NLRB, will "lay to rest some of the unfair accusations that have been made against our unions and our members," he said.

A new video on the Detroit newspaper strike is available from the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions. "Standing Up for American Jobs" includes front-line perspectives from strikers and footage of police abuse. To receive a free copy of the seven-minute video, contact Roger Kerson at the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, 150 Michigan, Detroit 48226; Phone 313/965-1478; FAX 313/965-1477; E-mail: RKerson@aol.com.

Unions and individuals wishing to advertise in the striker-produced Detroit Sunday Journal or to write to reporters or editors can do so at its plant: 3100 East Jefferson, Detroit 48207. William Brown is publisher, and his phone number is 313/567-9818.

Springsteen in tune with striking workers

Rock superstar Bruce Springsteen donated proceeds from his souvenir sales at his Jan. 10 concert in Detroit to the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions' strike fund and matched the amount with his own donation.

"Whatever their faults, unions have been the only powerful and effective voice working people have ever had in the history of this country," said Springsteen, whose latest album, "The Ghost of Tom Joad," evokes images of today's working families squeezed out in the global economy.

He also allowed the striking Detroit newspaper workers to set up informational tables in the lobby.

"We applaud his support and initiative," said David Hecker of the Detroit AFL-CIO. "He not only sings and writes about working people, their trials and tribulations; in addition to that, he takes further, concrete action to help working people in need. He's done that nationally, and it's great to see him do it here in Detroit."

BARGAINING

UFCW banks on SeaFirst

Some 5,300 employees of Seattle First National Bank are working under a new five-year contract with the Food and Commercial Workers.

The contract raises wages 2 percent immediately for those at the top scale, with a wage reopener in the second year. Under a merit-pay plan, workers who meet or exceed established performance standards will receive raises each year unless they are already paid the top scale for their classification.

The contract also changes the grievance procedure to allow binding arbitration. Previously, disputes were subject to non-binding fact finding.

The pact is the second negotiated after the merger of Bank of America, which owns SeaFirst, and Security Pacific Corp. in the late 1980s. At the time of merger, many longtime employees who were union members accepted a lucrative buyout package that caused union membership to drop below 50 percent of the employees, said Jim Hazlewood, a UFCW representative. The new contract allows SeaFirst to seek an election at the end of the term if UFCW does not represent a majority of the employees.

The first contract, ratified in December 1990, ended a 13-year legal battle that twice was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Zenith, IBEW agree

Production and maintenance workers at Zenith Electronics' Rauland Division will receive a 9.3 percent wage increase under a new three-year agreement.

The contract covers some 2,700 Electrical Workers at the Melrose Park, Ill., plant. The workers will receive pay hikes of 3.5 percent in the first year, followed by 3 percent raises in the following two years. The current average hourly wage is $9.50.

The deal also increases life insurance coverage, extends a 401(k) plan for salaried workers to union members and switches health insurance coverage from a Chicago HMO to a plan operated by Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

N.J. building trades agree

Two New Jersey Building and Construction Trades Councils reached agreement with contractors on a uniform set of working conditions that includes a no strike/no lockout clause.

The pact with the state Building Contractors Association covers construction work in Monmouth, Middlesex and Ocean counties, with negotiations under way in four more counties, the unions said.

The agreement eliminates the practice of paying nonworking personnel; sets a uniform five-day workweek and an eight-hour day; establishes standard second- and third-shift differentials of 25 percent and 30 percent; sets standard overtime pay, holidays and starting times; and sets safety training.

"These pro-union project agreements emphasize unanimity, increased competitiveness and a fair day's work for a fair day's wages. We think they include all the elements needed to provide construction users and owners with the kind of cost-effective, quality product that just doesn't exist in the nonunion sector in our industry," declared a joint statement by New Jersey BCTC President John Critchley, Monmouth-Ocean BCTC President James Grattan, Middlesex BCTC President Thomas Panconi and BCA officials.

Bayou restoration sought

In an effort to end a three-year dispute, the Steelworkers have demanded that Bayou Steel comply with federal labor laws and restore the lawful parts of a proposal it made in March 1993, before the union walked out.

The company's latest proposal, submitted Nov. 29, 1995, contained clauses that the National Labor Relations Board previously ruled illegal, said USWA Special Counsel Joe R. Whatley Jr.

The 200 members of USWA Local 9121 in La Place, La., were forced to strike March 21, 1993, because of Bayou's unfair labor practices. The NLRB has said that, barring a settlement, it will issue eight complaints against Bayou for failing to bargain in good faith.

Rather than "curing its outstanding unfair labor practices," the company's latest proposal compounds them, Whatley said.

Corporate irresponsibility aired

AT&T layoffs seen as more 'mindless job destruction'

By David Kameras

AT&T said it will cut a whopping 40,000 jobs from its payroll as part of its process of breaking up into three smaller companies, joining the legion of companies, large and small, that are abandoning their employees and their communities in their quest for an ever-larger bottom line.

"This is yet another case of the kind of mindless job destruction that has terrorized working Americans in recent years as corporate executives play to Wall Street," said Communications Workers President Morton Bahr.

"Why should it be in this country that every time a company announces tens of thousands of people will lose their jobs, that the shares of stock go up?" he asked.

Bahr, appearing on CNN's "Crossfire" program Jan. 7, noted there are many examples of downsizing devoid of layoffs and transfers, where good management practices and worker education mean that companies don't have to "throw people who have given years to the company out on the scrap heap."

Of the 40,000 scheduled to hit the streets, 7,000 will lose jobs in a seven-community area around AT&T headquarters, giving rise to a question central to defining the modern economy. "What responsibility, if any, does a corporation have to a community from which it's taken for 30, 40 or 50 years?" Bahr asked.

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich kicked off the "Crossfire" segment with the same basic question. "At a time when the stock market is soaring, but median wages are languishing and pink slips are proliferating, I think it is time to ask the basic question: What is a corporation for?" he asked.

The unabated spate of corporate downsizings means the further downsizing of wages as well, as a growing army of unemployed workers gives management greater leverage in determining rates of pay.

These discouraging developments have occurred in recent weeks:

- Mobil Corp. announced it will lay off some 500 employees from its exploration and production unit.
- Interstate Bakeries Corp. indicated it will close its East Brunswick, N.J., plant, affecting 500 production workers.
- Alexander & Baldwin Inc. is expected to cut about one-fourth of its 790 employees at its Crockett, Calif., sugar refinery.
- BP Oil Co. is shutting down its 75-year-old Marcus Hook refinery near Philadelphia this month, at the cost of most of its 535 jobs. The facility's new owner, Tosco Corp., after unsuccessfully trying to force layoffs and contract concessions, told Local 8-234b of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, "We do not intend to hire a work force and see no reason to continue discussions."
- Polaroid Corp. will cut 1,300 jobs, or 11.5 percent of its work force, by the end of March, following by a year an earlier cut of 930 jobs.
- Buster Brown is closing an Ider, Ala., apparel plant March 15, throwing 320 people out of work.
- A planned merger of Baltimore Gas and Electric Co. and Potomac Electric Power Co. is being billed as an opportunity to eliminate 1,250 jobs.
- Record snowstorms that shut down the federal government put additional pressure on long-furloughed civil servants and froze retail sales and transportation, putting a further chill on job creation.

Federal workers weren't the only ones struggling to make ends meet, as wage-earners found little cheer entering the new year. "America needs a raise," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, pointing to the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

From September 1979 to September 1995, the median worker took a wage cut of 4.6 percent, while those at the top third of the wealth ladder saw their bank accounts grow by 7.9 percent. The top 5 percent got a 29.1 percent raise, and the top 1 percent, 78 percent.

"During the past three years, wages have continued to fall, while productivity, profits and stock prices have all soared," reported John Cassidy in The New Yorker. "The country has experienced an unprecedented redistribution of income toward the rich."

Meanwhile, the Republican majority in Congress continues to stymie the Clinton administration's efforts to boost the poorest workers by increasing the minimum wage.

Reich said he will seek "every opportunity" to bump up the current $4.25 bench-mark rate, which has remained unchanged for five years. The White House has sought a two-stage increase to $5.15, but has met a roadblock on Capitol Hill, where debate on the proposal has been limited to one Senate hearing.

If not increased this year, the wage earned by some of America's poorest workers will hit a 40-year low against the cost of living, "essentially repealing the minimum-wage law for large segments of the work force," Reich told the Bureau of National Affairs.

The opposition of congressional Republicans to the administration's proposal is "terribly unseemly, given their advocacy of a capital gains tax cut at a time when the earnings gap is wider than it has been in 40 years," Reich said.

CWA, Bell Atlantic reach agreement

Continued from Page 1

The Wall Street Journal and Roll Call.

Nearly a quarter of a million union members in the company's service area were sent letters asking them to drop such optional services as call waiting and call forwarding. Also, CWA contacted Bell Atlantic shareholders seeking their help in gaining a fair contract.

In addition, Rep. Nita M. Lowey (D-N.Y.) wrote a letter to Bell Atlantic CEO Ray Smith, saying, "it is my hope that Bell Atlantic will also reach an agreement with its employees that includes fair wage increases and employment security guarantees."

Lowey, co-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, joined Bahr at a September press briefing to express her concern over the company's stance.

They cited a report by the Institute for Women's Policy research that warned the telecommunications industry is in danger of losing its status as a front-runner in providing high-wage jobs for women.

Under the proposal on the table at that time, they said, women earning an average of $25,000 a year would receive much less than would go to men earning $45,000 a year.

Smith was the target of several rallies and actions off the job site, with marches in Philadelphia and Baltimore in support of workers.

At a Nov. 18 gathering in Baltimore's Camden Yards, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney lauded labor solidarity and determination.

"We are here today to deliver a message to every woman and man in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia who believes in decency and dignity and justice," he said. "Our message is: We will not give in to corporate greed."

Nearly 6,000 CWA members faced suspension by the company for workplace protests.

Workers were disciplined for calling in sick, wearing T-shirts to work with the message "Road Kill on the Information Superhighway" and for handing out fliers telling the public how to block "900" service.

In that case, the National Labor Relations Board issued a complaint finding probable cause that the company violated the National Labor Relations Act in suspending the employees. A hearing is tentatively set for May.

Bell Atlantic, the nation's second-largest telecommunications company, had throughout the negotiations insisted it would not agree to a contract similar to those CWA brokered with the other regional Bell operating companies.

The relative ease with which those settlements were reached, and the tremendous profits reported by Bell Atlantic in recent years, highlighted the company's intransigence.

"In 1994, Bell Atlantic earned profits of $1.4 billion on revenues of $13.8 billion," Sweeney noted during the Baltimore rally. "Over the past five years, Bell Atlantic revenues have grown 20 percent and profits have grown 30 percent."

CWA also enlisted international labor solidarity in the fight through the Postal, Telephone and Telegraph international trade secretariat. The company has holdings in New Zealand, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

Nepal rugmakers agree to stop using children

By Muriel H. Cooper

In a major step to reduce the global exploitation of children, 40 of the largest carpet manufacturers in Nepal have formed the Nepal RUGMARK Foundation, pledging that their products are made without child labor.

Nepal is the first carpet-producing country with a comprehensive program certifying children are not involved in the manufacture of exported carpets. The foundation includes employers accounting for 70 percent of the total carpet production of the country.

Tufenkian Tibetian Carpets in New York will be the first U.S. company to import the RUGMARK products.

"We applaud manufacturers who have joined the RUGMARK to bring an end to child servitude in the carpet industry," said Linda Golodner, co-chair of the Child Labor Coalition and its RUGMARK campaign.

"This is a significant breakthrough," said Darlene Adkins, who has testified before Congress for the CLC. "We are expecting the rugs will arrive in the United States in late March. Consumers will be able to look for the RUGMARK symbol affixed to the back of the carpet and know this product was not made by children," she said.

The CLC is a Washington-based national network that exchanges information and provides a forum to end child labor in the United States and abroad. Its members include representatives from labor, women and health care groups.

The CLC began the RUGMARK campaign in September 1994 to raise consumer awareness of the exploitation of children in the carpet industry and encourage consumers in turn through their purchasing power to urge South Asian countries to free children from bondage and exploitation.

Bonded child labor is prevalent in the carpet industry. Almost 300,000 children are working in the carpet industry in India, 900,000 children below the age of 14 in Pakistan and 200,000 in Nepal.

The children work more than eight hours a day and are woefully fed, with many sleeping on the floor beside their looms. Thousands of them have been sexually and physically abused by their employers. The children become victims of disease and musculoskeletal disorders, and many die before they turn 12 years old.

Kailash Satyarthi, chair of the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SACCS), has worked to free thousands of children forced to work in carpet plants. As a result of his efforts and outspokenness, he was arrested in June 1995 for allegedly slandering a rug manufacturer. His case is still pending in the Haryana, India courts.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Kailash Satyarthi, chair of the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude, meets with Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), sponsor of the Child Labor Deterrence Act, to discuss ways to prevent child exploitation.

It is actions like this, coupled with the introduction by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) of the Child Labor Deterrence Act, that has helped to raise Americans' consciousness on the issue, said the CLC.

The bill would direct the secretary of labor to maintain a list of foreign industries and their host countries that use children under 15 in the manufacturing or mining of products for exports, and would call for civil and criminal penalties against violators.

"Our laws fall silent when it comes to products made through the exploitation of child labor," said Harkin. Yet, America has laws that prohibit importation of everything from ivory to products made by prison labor, he said.

The United States is the world's second-largest market for hand-knotted Oriental carpets, with imports of $172 million in 1993 from India alone.

"So far we have 14,000 consumers that have signed petitions for RUGMARK carpets in the U.S.," said Adkins. India has manufactured 120,000 RUGMARKS for export to Germany. There are negotiations underway for RUGMARK to be affixed to Pakistani carpets, she said.

Meanwhile, members of the Food and Commercial Workers planned to leaflet consumers on the issue outside of the National Oriental Rug Show in Atlanta.

Hong Kong unionists push reform

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Since Hong Kong's elections last September, the four members of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions elected to the Hong Kong Legislative Council have been pressing an agenda to get benefits and social welfare programs before China takes over in 1997.

"They, along with the British, have been criticized for trying to break the bank in Hong Kong," said Asian-American Free Labor Institute Director of Program Coordination Mark Hankin, who recently visited the country. "The British have thrown in the towel but the HKCTU is really on the forefront. People are interested in knowing what the unions can do."

The pro-democracy candidates are seeking programs ranging from social security to workers' compensation and Medicaid-like health programs.

AAFLI has been working with trade unionists in Hong Kong, including Han Dongfang, winner of the 1993 George Meany Human Rights Award, who publishes a newsletter there. Han's publication is being smuggled into China, where workers are being exposed to issues of worker rights.

"The skeptics who say that the people of Hong Kong don't care about democracy have been proven dead wrong," said Asian-American Free Labor Institute Executive Director Kenneth P. Hutchison. "Voting in greater numbers than ever before, the citizens of Hong Kong handed a sweeping election victory to pro-democratic forces."

In the last elections scheduled before the country's reversion to Chinese rule in 1997, pro-democracy candidates won 34 seats for majority of the 60-member Hong Kong Legislative Council (Legco) last September.

Among the union-associated candidates, four HKCTU representatives were elected, compared with one from the Beijing-front union. Pro-Beijing candidates gained only six seats.

Prior to the elections, the HKCTU set about convincing voters that unions and workers have a role in the political process. Having succeeded on that front, the unions developed a labor platform.

"There were tremendous training, educational campaigns and rallies," said Bob Senser of AAFLI. "The media is still relatively free and they were in the media all the time. The HKCTU actually ran more candidates than any other group."

In addition, the mass support from ordinary working people in Hong Kong motivated a lot of people to go out and vote, Senser noted. "People were subject to a lot of harassment, but they voted anyway."

"It just proves there are a lot of people like Harry Wu — people who are willing to risk their futures for the cause to show that people who believe in democracy have support of the people," Senser declared. "It's a real blow to Beijing. The fact is that workers carried it off."

"The election outcome is good news for democracy, bad news for the Communist Politburo in Beijing," said Hutchison. "It exposed what would happen in China if the Chinese people were free to make a choice: the Communist Party would quickly lose the monopoly of power that it now holds."

Trade deficit keeps growing at record level

Administration pledges trade pact enforcement

By David Kameras

The U.S. trade deficit in goods narrowed slightly in October, led by some growth in the export of services, but the improvement was not enough to stop an almost certain record for the year.

The month's figure, $16.1 billion, was down from $16.7 billion in September. But for the year to date, the deficit reached $138 billion, $13 billion more than the same point a year earlier and fast approaching the record $150.1 billion reached in 1994.

Particularly significant is the continuing trend toward ever-greater deficits in the trade of manufactured goods, a figure that jumped from $15.8 billion to $18.4 billion in October, and from $125 billion to $152.1 billion cumulatively from the same point in 1994.

"While the improved performance in the trade in services is a good sign, we should not lose sight of the fact that the deficit for manufactured goods continues to grow at a record pace, directly affecting employment and wages in that vital economic sector," said Mark Anderson, director of the AFL-CIO Task Force on Trade.

The bilateral merchandise trade deficit with Mexico, which worsened by $100 million for the month, was $1.4 billion, compared with $82 million a year earlier. For the year to date, it was $12.7 billion, quite a reversal from the $1.7 billion cumulative *surplus* scored in October 1994.

And the imbalances are by no means limited to developing countries. The merchandise trade deficit with Canada, America's foremost trading partner, reached $14.5 billion in the first 10 months of 1995, an increase of 38 percent over the same period in 1994, with autos and parts accounting for much of the gap.

Canada is one of six members of the Group of Seven industrialized economies that have sold $85.9 billion more in goods so far in 1995 to the United States than they have purchased.

"The cumulative trade imbalance through October points to another year of record trade deficits for 1995," said AFL-CIO economist Greg Woodhead. "U.S. government policy must result in more balanced trade, especially with the developed economies of G-7 trading partners."

To that end, the Clinton administration is demonstrating its commitment to enforcing the terms of trade agreements by setting up a permanent trade office dedicated to monitoring trade agreements, implementing trade laws, determining compliance by foreign governments "and pursuing actions necessary to enforce U.S. rights under those agreements and laws."

"The most important part of our job is what happens after we sign an agreement," U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor said.

Kantor will have his hands full with the North American Free Trade Agreement, which according to a recent report has contributed to deteriorating conditions for workers, especially women and those engaged in rural low-wage manufacturing, farmers and the environment in both Mexico and the United States.

"The evidence shows that, instead of engendering sustainable development, NAFTA is leading our countries down a path of increasing inequality and environmental destruction," said Karen Hansen-Kuhn of The Development GAP, which released the report, "No Laughter in NAFTA," along with Equipo PUEBLO and the Institute for Policy Studies.

The administration also is continuing a high-level interagency review of a request by the Machinists for a Section 301 investigation of China for demanding the transfer of technology as a condition of foreign investment.

"These transfers cost the United States tens of thousands of jobs, undermine the U.S. industrial base and result in the loss of aerospace technology, much of which has been developed with taxpayer support," said IAM President George J. Kourpias.

The union also wants the U.S. Export-Import Bank to review its policies regarding the financing of sales of aircraft to China.

Workers seek to sidetrack proposed rail merger

Unions warn deal would create big job losses

By David Kameras

A proposed merger between the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific railroads has triggered intense opposition from workers who make their living off the tracks.

During a Jan. 11 public hearing in Houston, Transportation Communications Union member Phil Trittel, representing organized labor, told the Texas Railroad Commission that the resulting monopoly would "prey on businesses, trample on communities and destroy good jobs."

The carriers themselves have predicted that 4,000 jobs would be lost, a figure the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department called "severely understated" and ignoring the consequences for workers employed at smaller railroads and in the motor carrier sector, as well as communities and shippers.

"America rejected the abuses of wealthy railroad barons and their monopolies a century ago," TTD President Ron Carey said. "Because the UP/SP merger would return us to those days, regulators should derail it as a job-killing, anti-competitive deal."

"The thousands of workers who stand to lose their jobs because of this merger have helped to build these companies and now are being discarded to make a few top dogs richer and more powerful," Carey added. "Texas and the entire nation should say 'no' to this sweetheart deal."

Crews in limbo

Meanwhile, in a setback for rail labor, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the time that crews spend at the end of an assignment waiting for a ride to their home terminal is not to be considered as on duty.

Unions had argued that such time affects the fatigue level of workers and should be counted toward the 12-hour maximum stipulated by the Hours of Service Act, a statute intended to promote rail safety.

Expressing concern instead for the complexities carriers face in scheduling their trains, Justice Anthony Kennedy maintained that "time spent waiting for deadhead transportation away from a duty site does not cause the fatigue that implicates these safety concerns."

However, in arguments presented to the high court last October, unions noted that workers are sometimes required to spend up to 10 hours waiting for transportation, and are sometimes asked to perform work, such as keeping watch over the train, during the wait.

"They're tired," said attorney Lawrence Mann.

"Day in, day out, their time is irregular," he said. "It causes fatigue — and fatigue is a cause of 30 percent of rail accidents."

The court review, sought by rail labor, contradicts a 1992 ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, later adopted by the Federal Railroad Administration, that waiting time is on-duty time. That action on a lawsuit brought by the Locomotive Engineers and the United Transportation Union was challenged by railway management and rejected by another appeals court, resulting in "limbo time" applying in all states not included in the 9th Circuit.

In another development, a federal judge ordered members of the Maintenance of Way Employees to end a five-day strike against Conrail over the purchase of 100 miles of track in Central Pennsylvania from the rail giant, saying the actions already were precluded by a preliminary injunction issued last April.

BMWE, which maintains that the sale of the "Clearfield Cluster" to businessman R.J. Corman would cost 19 members their jobs, called the court's decision "erroneous" and, echoing the theme of a protest it staged in front of the National Mediation Board last November, reiterated its request for release from mediation in its negotiations with Conrail.

ICC protections retained

After intense lobbying by the Transportation Trades Department and the White House, the Republican-led Congress reversed itself and put back into a government reorganization bill important worker protections it earlier sought to jettison.

The legislation, which eliminated the 108-year-old Interstate Commerce Commission Jan. 1, stipulates that new carriers created out of the merger of small and mid-size carriers cannot unilaterally tear up labor contracts or move work to nonunion railroads. The new law also ensures one year severance pay at mid-size railroads affected by sale or merger, and retains six years' severance at large carriers.

House and Senate negotiators earlier had stripped the bill of the protective language, a move that would have "significantly harm(ed) the existing rights of workers employed by small- and medium-size railroads," TTD President Ron Carey said in a letter to Congress.

Left unchanged, the legislation would have granted rail carriers "the freedom to trample on collective bargaining agreements, to deny protections to employees harmed by Class III and short-line railroad deals and reduce benefits to Class II railroad workers."

"Thousands of railroad workers could have been at the mercy of newly formed railroad giants or the whims of a federal panel that could wipe away hard-fought labor agreements, while not touching generous severance packages for management," added Rep. James L. Oberstar (D-Minn.).

Conferees then reversed course in the face of a promised White House veto. "This is now a good bill which protects the interests of railroad workers and managers alike," Oberstar said.

ORGANIZING

Sour notes at TNN

The Television and Radio Artists have told their members not to work on programming produced for or broadcast by The Nashville Network.

TNN has refused to voluntarily recognize AFTRA artists working on TNN programming. Enforcement of AFTRA's "No Contract, No Work" rules comes after several months of unsuccessful attempts to arrive at an agreement with TNN.

"When the management of TNN understands that performers working for them want AFTRA representation, and that the union can assist TNN through its international and legislative activities, and in other areas, they will realize that AFTRA is not a threat, but a benefit," said Bruce York, AFTRA executive director.

NLRB backs UFCW drive

The National Labor Relations Board ordered the reinstatement of a union member, and the Food and Commercial Workers resumed a campaign at five Illinois grocery stores.

County Market violated federal labor law when it dismissed Dawn Aper, a longtime UFCW member, the NLRB said. She was reinstated as a meat clerk with full seniority, back pay and benefits. The board instructed County Market to tell its employees it would not "lay off, threaten or fire anyone for union activity."

With the benefits of a union thus reinforced, UFCW said they will "continue our campaign to organize County Market," which employs about 700 people.

Union makes the grade

Nonsupervisory professionals at the University of Washington voted 142 to 102 for representation by Service Employees District 925.

Earlier this fall, the SEIU unit won card check recognition for more than 370 office workers at the school.

HRDI confronts economic changes

'Power-sharing, alliance key to workers' future'

By Muriel H. Cooper

With the American work force in transition and as new work force development policies are being forged, "it is essential that labor be a key part of the equation," Lynn Meyers, executive director of the Human Resource's Development Institute, told delegates to HRDI's annual conference in Orlando, Fla.

More than 500 people attended about 40 workshops during the conference — all centered around helping workers cope with a new kind of employer who won't hesitate to pull out of a community to save a few bucks and ship jobs offshore, or a government that has shifted its direction in how it handles employment and training services.

"Congress is putting the final touches on legislation that will kill or redirect 80 to 100 federal job programs — to be replaced by block grants to the states — with significantly reduced funding levels," Meyers said.

Services once delivered by the public sector may be privatized, he warned, with standards varying from state to state and local training programs discontinued. Meanwhile, workers also are being battered by union busters and low-wage jobs, he added.

"We are revitalizing the labor movement to take on the challenges of the global economy," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka told the conference, "but we demand a seat at the table when policies are developed."

"It is time we restored upward mobility to the American worker," he said. "And it is time employers started investing in those people whose rising productivity will make them more successful."

Meyers called for real power-sharing between workers and management, which will require a rethinking of philosophies and the addition of resources. AFL-CIO Vice President Gloria Johnson urged the labor movement to reach out "to utilize talents of all our members — not just a chosen few.

"It is especially urgent for women and people of color," who will represent 80 percent of all new workers by the turn of the century, said Johnson, who is president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Labor-management committees and peer support groups have proven to be useful in situations where new technology, work processes or models of organization are being instituted, Meyers said. Unions must become connected in new ways to different segments in their communities and must take the lead in shaping school-to-work initiatives, a role they can successfully fulfill from their proven apprenticeship program experiences.

The conference was reflective of the broad-based alliance to which Meyers alluded, including representatives from government, unions, universities, state federations and private-industry councils.

Co-sponsors of the conference include the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department, Public Employee Department, Industrial Union Department and the Building and Construction Trades Department, as well as the Department for Professional Employees and Union Privilege.

It is clear "that we have not lost touch with the needs of our members and that we have much to contribute to the future of the American economy," said Meyers.

Since HRDI was created almost 20 years ago as the AFL-CIO's employment and training arm, its focus has been broadened to include job literacy, job development and enrichment, technology and retraining.

UFCW challenges Publix product safety measures

The Food and Commercial Workers challenged Publix Supermarkets to change its practice of reworking, rewrapping and re-dating products during a Dec. 19 press conference in Orlando, Fla.

According to former and current Publix workers, the company reworks and rewraps meat products when the products are at or near the expiration of their original "sell-by" dates. The products are redated and offered for sale without disclosure to consumers of the original "sell-by" dates.

If the company does not change its labeling and dating practices, including full disclosure to consumers, the union plans a consumer information campaign.

Engineers settle with Navy on overtime work

By David Kameras

It was a long time coming, but justice has been achieved by more than 2,000 workers toiling in naval shipyards.

After nearly two decades of contention, the Professional and Technical Engineers have achieved a settlement with the Navy ensuring that hundreds of workers who were deprived of overtime pay will receive it in the future, and they and hundreds more will receive monetary benefits.

At issue was the Fair Labor Standards Act status of engineers and technicians, as well as a variety of health, quality, planning and estimating personnel, with regard to the statute's duties test for determining eligibility for time-and-a-half pay for hours in excess of 40 hours a week.

The conflict was greatly exacerbated in 1986 when the Reagan administration's Office of Personnel Management declared all federal employees above the GS-11 salary level presumptively exempt from the FLSA provisions, regardless of their assigned duties.

Using an interest-based negotiations (IBN) process to reach a settlement of longstanding litigation, the union achieved a number of benefits for its members:

- Workers represented by IFPTE will receive an estimated $30 million in back pay.
- Hundreds of workers forced for years to work without full overtime pay will be paid full wages due.
- Others, who will continue to be classified as exempt, will be entitled to monetary bonuses and an enhanced compensatory-time program in recognition of long hours worked on arduous assignments.
- An employer-sponsored education program will assist and reward employees seeking engineering and science degrees and professional licenses.
- The employer will fund a union-sponsored training program and reimburse the union's expenses.

IFPTE President Paul E. Almeida said his union is particularly proud of the features pertaining to training and additional compensation for exempt workers.

"The union could not have achieved either of these results through litigation or traditional bargaining under federal-sector labor law," he said. "We won these benefits because we took the risk to engage in interest-based negotiations and insisted on results which would serve not just our immediate interest in back pay, but also the need to invest in our members' education and professional development."

Almeida described the IBN process as a cooperative endeavor to seek common ground between labor and management.

NEWSMAKERS

AFL-CIO President **John J. Sweeney** was elected to the Alliance for Health Reform board of directors. The alliance, which is chaired by Sen. **John D. Rockefeller** (D-W.Va.), was founded in 1991 to provide information on the U.S. health system to elected officials, journalists and others who shape public opinion. Sweeney has been active in promoting health care reform as former president of the Service Employees and chair of the AFL-CIO's health care committee.

George Becker, president of the Steelworkers, named **Ron A. Bloom** as special assistant to the USWA president for strategic projects. Bloom, a founding partner of the New York-based investment banking firm of Keilin and Bloom, has served as an adviser to the union in a number of large worker ownership transactions, financial restructuring and collective bargaining negotiations with major steel companies.

Dennis J. Gannon was elected secretary-treasurer of the Chicago AFL-CIO, replacing **Don A. Turner,** who was elected president December 1995 following the death of **Michael Bruton**. Gannon served as assistant to the president at the time of Bruton's death.

Michael G. Connors was named deputy assistant secretary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. He will direct and coordinate activities in OSHA's regional and area offices as well as be responsible for the agency's directorates of federal and state operations, compliance programs and construction. Connors is the former administrator of OSHA's Chicago regional office.

Bill Mountjoy has been appointed acting director of the AFL-CIO Department of Computer Systems and Services. Mountjoy has served as director of information services for the Service Employees.

Leon Lynch, vice president of the Steelworkers, presented a check for $40,000 to the American Red Cross to help residents from St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix after Hurricane Marilyn devastated their communities. Lynch visited the islands last September and reported that 90 percent of USWA members there were among the 25,000 people in need of aid. The union also distributed 9,000 lantern stoves and flashlights throughout the communities. The USWA offices on St. Thomas and St. Croix were used by the Red Cross as warehouses for emergency aid, with USWA members helping in the effort.

AWARDS

The National Trade Union Council for Human Rights honored **Michael Sacco**, president of the Seafarers, **Brian McLaughlin**, president of the New York City AFL-CIO, and **Jack Goldstein**, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of OMI Corp., for their work at fighting discrimination. The council was formed by the Jewish Labor Committee to advance human and civil rights.

DEATH

Noted arbitrator and mediator **Sylvester Garrett** died in Pittsburgh after a long illness. He was 84.

Garrett's career spanned more than six decades, beginning as a review attorney for the National Labor Relations Board. He chaired the Regional War Labor Board during World War II and later served as vice chairman of the National Wage Stabilization Board. President Truman asked Garrett to help organize the Korean War Wage Stabilization Board in 1950.

The Steelworkers praised Garrett's work as chairman of the U.S. Steel/USWA Board of Arbitration from 1950 to 1979, when the major steel producers bargained as a group.

Garrett is survived by his wife, Molly Yard, former president of the National Organization of Women, two sons, two brothers and five grandchildren.

CORRECTIONS

The Electrical Workers' convention will be held in Philadelphia Sept. 16-21. The Electronic Workers will convene Nov. 21-25 in Orlando, Fla. The Laborers' convention will be held Sept. 23-26 in Las Vegas. Other conventions omitted from the Jan. 8 calendar include: Postal Workers, Aug. 19-23 in Los Angeles; Machinists, Sept. 21-28 in Chicago; and the Elevator Constructors, July 29-Aug. 2 in Las Vegas.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper

RESOURCES

Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations is offering workshops on subjects including privatization, organizing, workplace violence and diversity. Classes usually are held at the metropolitan district office in New York City at 16 East 34th St., between Madison and 5th Avenues. Contact Arthur T. Matthews, director of In-House Labor Programs, at 212/340-2818.

Managed Health Care: Labor's Response, an annual conference for labor representatives sponsored by Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, will be held March 10-12 at the Holiday Inn-Georgetown, Washington. Contact Catherine Lundy at 517/355-5070.

VIDEOS

Labor On-Line explains LaborNET, the private on-line computer service for union members from the AFL-CIO. The video is narrated by AFL-CIO systems operator Blair Calton. The videotape is $10 for VHS and $25 for 3/4-inch copies. Contact the Labor Institute of Public Affairs at 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Molding and Shaping the Future is a new 13-minute video about the Human Resources Development Institute and the services it offers to the labor movement in employment and training. Contact HRDI, 815 16th St. N.W., Room 405, Washington, D.C. 20006; or call 202/638-3912.

PUBLICATIONS

Insurmountable Obstacles — An International Comparison of the Path to Union Recognition Between the U.S. and the Industrial Democracies highlights that divergence and surveys its cause — labor laws that differ from country to country. Copies are $3.50 each for 100 or less, and $2.50 for more than 100. Contact the Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

The following publications are available from the AFL-CIO Public Employee Department, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. **Public Employees Bargain for Excellence: A Compendium of State Public Sector Labor Relations Laws** provides detailed information on federal, state and local collective bargaining laws covering public employees. **Public Employees: Serving America with Pride** is a program of action, which contains the 54 resolutions adopted at the PED convention and the Officers' Report.

UNION NEWS

Eavesdropping challenged

The Illinois AFL-CIO was denied a restraining order in its efforts to safeguard workers' privacy against a law allowing employers to eavesdrop on phone conversations.

"This law is a violation of the Illinois Constitution," said Donald Johnson, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO. "The governor could have stricken the eavesdropping language from the bill and the General Assembly could have passed the other provisions in it early in January. Instead, the governor chose not to protect workers."

The state federation will continue to seek a permanent injunction against the measure.

School privatization flunks

Faced with a private company's hard-line stand during a budget crunch, Baltimore officials fired the controversial firm that managed nine of its public schools.

The firing of Education Alternatives Inc. in late November won cheers from the Baltimore Teachers Union, an AFT affiliate. The nine schools will revert to city control next year.

Loretta Johnson, co-president of the local, said EAI failed academically. In EAI's nine schools, the number of teachers dropped from 300 to 175, and class size rose to more than 35 pupils per teacher, Johnson said. EAI tried to make up for fewer teachers by hiring "interns," and then turned to "temporary workers and warm bodies," she said.

IBT joins 'Habitat'

The Teamsters signed an agreement to become national partners with Habitat for Humanity to help build homes for needy families.

"No one should have to live on the streets or in cardboard boxes. We're asking our members to help families get decent housing," said IBT President Ron Carey.

In addition to helping with the hands-on construction work, the union is encouraging its over two million active and retired members to help transport materials to building sites.

The Carpenters also have a national agreement with Habitat for Humanity, and discussions are under way with the Bricklayers and the Painters.

ADA endorses Clinton

Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) endorsed President Clinton and Vice President Gore for re-election in 1996, becoming the first national organization to formally support the president's re-election bid.

"The Democratic Party must fight a battle on behalf of traditional American values," said ADA President Jack Sheinkman, former president of the Clothing and Textile Workers. "The Republican Party has abandoned the progressive traditions of Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Robert LaFollette."

This is the first time the ADA has endorsed an incumbent Democratic president for re-election during the party's primary season.

The ADA was founded in 1947 and has several union presidents on its board, including AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney. Steve Rosenthal, political director for the federation, addressed the ADA board before it endorsed Clinton and Gore.

Public workers in budget bind

1.7 million health care jobs at risk, study says

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Public-sector workers and the services they provide may be threatened by massive cuts in federal, state and local funding for government, while some employers increasingly are taking the attitude that workers' views do not matter.

"Our projections are that 1.7 million health care workers could lose their jobs, for instance, as a result of the proposed cuts in Medicare and Medicaid," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney during the Dec. 14 meeting of the State and Local Labor Management Committee, a 23-member consortium of unions representing state and local public employees.

"Unions . . . will not sit silent seeing families ripped to their roots while many of the experts who got us into this mess in the first place exclude us from the decisions affecting our future," Sweeney declared.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that a balanced budget by the year 2002 indicates there would be a 3 percent cut in funds in fiscal 1996, which would grow to a 26 percent reduction in 2002. Such dramatic cuts would have a devastating impact on public employees and on state and local services to the public, the center concludes.

"All public employees are going to be adversely affected," said Steve Porter, field director for the AFT. "The question is: Are states prepared for the shift? The states are unprepared for block grants. They are not prepared for such flexibility and autonomy."

A survey by the Council of Governors' Policy Advisors found that fewer than 10 states were involved in deliberative planning, more than 20 states were involved in moderate planning and fewer than 10 states had done little formal planning, Porter explained.

"Congress can't take all of this money out of the economy and not have a devastating impact," said AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee.

McEntee said public workers would be affected in three ways: without a budget, the uncertainty prevents states from planning; many programs, such as Medicaid and Occupational Safety and Health enforcement, already have less money available; and the local economies will suffer.

The enormous cuts in Medicaid will be "devastating" to health care workers, said Richard W. Cordtz, president of the Service Employees. "Staff will be downsized and patient care will definitely suffer as a result."

Last summer, Los Angeles was faced with a $655 million deficit and planned to lay off 12,000 health care workers at hospitals and clinics. However, through cooperation with SEIU and with enough money from President Clinton to bail out the system temporarily, the union lost only 1,600 jobs.

The story is somewhat brighter for essential personnel like fire fighters and police officers. "We've seen no real changes," said George Burke, spokesman for the Fire Fighters.

"Cities and municipalities have attempted changes but we have always tried to get good benefits and wages. But many of our local unions are working with fire chiefs and governments to streamline," he said.

The results of the federal budget cuts will hit some states harder than others. According to the CBPP, the 10 states projected to feel the greatest per-capita loss in 2002 are Louisiana, West Virginia, New York, Rhode Island, Alaska, North Dakota, Montana, Maine, Massachusetts and South Dakota.

In New York, members of the United Federation of Teachers rejected a proposed contract that contained a two-year wait for salary increases after Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani announced major pay increases for himself and other political and management officials.

The teachers' anger was exacerbated by the mayor's announcement of the pay raises, said UFT President Sandra Feldman. It was the first time in the 35-year history of the UFT that the rank and file rejected a tentative contract.

Some 11,000 members of AFSCME District Council 37 in New York will complete their contract votes by the end of January. The union's contract also includes a two-year wage freeze.

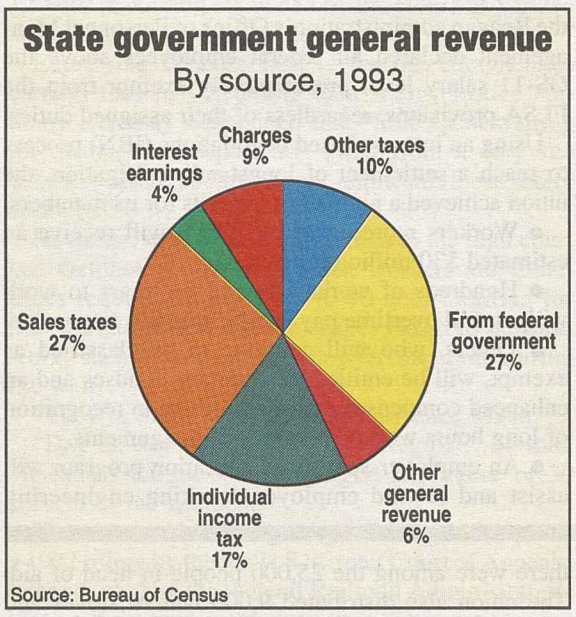
The Illinois state legislature already has begun to restructure its state agencies because of the anticipated block grants, said Illinois AFL-CIO Director of Legislation Sean Stott. Seven state agencies will be combined, but the total number of workers affected is not known.

Republican Gov. Jim Edgar recently said in his state of the state address that he will decrease the number of state employees.

In Maryland, Gov. Parris N. Glendening (D) submitted a $15 billion budget to the state legislature that includes no cost-of-living increases for the state's 71,000 employees. Junior employees will receive step increases but nearly 60 percent of the state's 71,000 government workers will not get a pay raise.

"State employees have been giving, giving, giving and not getting anything," said Sue Esty, a legislative representative for AFSCME District Council 92. "At what point does this break the back of state employees?"

Meanwhile, more than 100 public employees in Washington, D.C., took to the streets last month to angrily protest unjust "ivory tower" plans to slash city jobs and benefits. The workers, led by Metropolitan Washington AFL-CIO President Joslyn N. Williams and public employee union officials, used garbage trucks and other city vehicles to block rush hour traffic.



Council to meet; General Board put off

The AFL-CIO Executive Council will receive a series of reports on changes in the labor movement Jan. 24, but President John J. Sweeney has decided to postpone meetings of the General Board and state federations because of scheduling conflicts.

The General Board was scheduled to consider political endorsements for president and vice president on Jan. 25, and officers of state AFL-CIOs were slated to meet the following day to discuss political action. Those meetings have been pushed back to a later date, probably in mid-March, after it was learned that some could not attend in January.

The council will hold its first full session since the 1995 convention expanded its number from 35 to 54, including the addition of an executive vice president. Along with the 51 vice presidents representing previously unrepresented sectors and smaller unions, the council now has seven women, nine African-Americans, two Hispanics and one Asian-Pacific American, more closely reflecting the face of the American workplace.

Sweeney, who along with Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson won the first contested election in AFL-CIO history, appointed five transition work groups to study how to integrate his platform with existing programs.

Reports from those work groups, composed of staff members from affiliated unions, will be presented to the council. Those groups have been focusing on organizing, political action, strategic campaigns, communications and union education and training.

Sweeney also is expected to appoint new chairs for various committees, and to review committee assignments in light of the larger council in preparation for the regular winter meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla., which will begin Feb. 19.

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Steelworkers keep pressure on Bridgestone/Firestone as talks resume.
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UNION YES

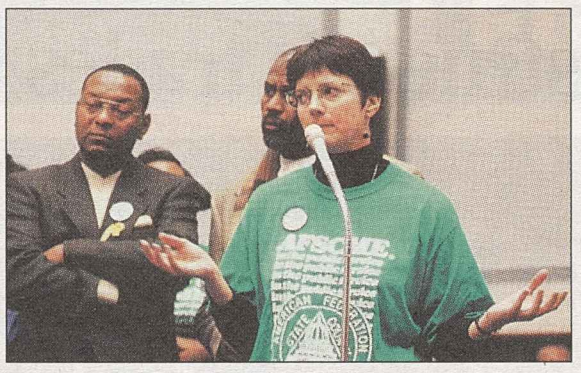
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Workers seek answers at a congressional hearing on the government shutdown. **See story, Page 3.**

Federation prepares for major changes



Michael Gutwig/Northwest Labor Press

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson draws enthusiastic applause from Oregon senatorial candidate Ron Wyden (D), center, and Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, right, during a campaign rally. Labor's extensive support helped Wyden win. **See story, Page 5.**

Council sets new programs on track

By Michael Byrne

A "turning point for the labor movement" was heralded by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney as he presented to the Executive Council his plans for a number of structural and program changes at the federation.

Council committees will consider a number of recommendations, including a new center for strategic support in organizing drives and bargaining campaigns, and an institute to help unions with employee buyouts, pension fund management and corporate restructuring schemes.

The council quickly embraced a plan to raise $35 million for a targeted political campaign to reverse the House of Representatives' anti-worker tide under Republican Speaker Newt Gingrich, and to revive labor's influence politically and legislatively. **(See story, Page 1)**. Much of the money would go toward an advertising campaign run simultaneously with a series of hearings on wage issues and an intensified organizing drive Sweeney calls "Union Summer."

Organizing is clearly priority No. 1, Sweeney said, as he appointed Richard Bensinger to head a new Organizing Department, folding in the highly successful Organizing Institute that Bensinger headed since its founding in 1989. Allison Porter, Bensinger's longtime lieutenant, will head the institute.

Besides directing the Union Summer, the department will administer a $20 million organizing fund, campaign to improve national and state laws governing organizing and develop a long-term strategy to organize the South.

To chair the federation's Organizing Committee, Sweeney appointed Laborers President Arthur A. Coia, who vowed to reach out to all affiliated unions and to all working Americans. "We need to cast our nets wide, organizing in areas and industries that have been neglected in the past," he said, saying the federation would "work aggressively with women and minorities."

Among the other key committees that will examine recommendations from transition work groups set up by Sweeney and report to the February council meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla., include: Political Education, which will be headed by AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee; Public Affairs, now led by Food and Commercial Workers President Douglas H. Dority; and Education, headed by AFT President Albert Shanker.

The council heard reports from the chairs of each

Continued on Page 12

Unprecedented political push planned

By Michael Byrne

The AFL-CIO prepared for its most elaborate and extensive political effort in history, focusing on member education and training for as many as 2,500 union activists and staff for an intense get-out-the-vote effort in 1996.

The Executive Council approved a $35 million program after hearing plans developed by a transition work group appointed by President John J. Sweeney and led by Political Director Steve Rosenthal. Sweeney also appointed AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee to chair the Political Education Committee that will hammer out the details, including funding mechanisms.

Sweeney told the council of plans to hold field hearings to focus attention during the primary elections on the growing wage gap between the rich and average working families. To further delineate the issues, the federation would take the case for unions to the public through a series of national television and radio ads, he said.

"This election could be a watershed for American workers," Sweeney said. "We need to ensure that our political efforts are of the same magnitude as the threat we face."

That threat was laid out in stark detail by Legislative Director Peggy Taylor, who reviewed how the Republican leadership in Congress has led the assault not only on Medicare, Medicaid and education programs, but also on job safety and pension protections, collective bargaining and prevailing wages, all the while pushing a block-grant strategy that would threaten both services and jobs.

Pointing out that 40 of the 73 freshman Republicans in the House had a 0 voting record from labor's

Continued on Page 5

Workplace safety suffering slings of outrageous cuts

By Colleen M. O'Neill

The protracted budget battle has put worker safety at risk, and the situation could get much worse if Congress follows through on the draconian cuts plotted by the Republican leadership.

Inspections by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration have been curtailed by budget cuts included in three continuing resolutions, with more than 1,440 inspections delayed by the nearly four weeks of furloughs in November, December and January. Some 2,000 federal and state inspectors are charged with protecting 93 million workers at more than 6 million workplaces.

In addition, deadlines have slipped for many of the agency's standards, including the long-awaited ergonomics rule.

According to OSHA Administrator Joseph A. Dear, the reduced funding and shutdowns have forced the agency to trim its regulatory agenda to focus on some high-priority rule-makings. He said last month that final regulations on exposure to methylene chloride and 1,3-butadiene are priorities, along with the initial proposal for employer safety and health programs and a proposed revision of injury and illness recordkeeping rules.

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Blueprint set for pay equity in construction trades

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

More aggressive enforcement and higher affirmative action goals are key to achieving pay equity in the construction industry, according to a study by Chicago Women in the Trades.

The report, "Building Equal Opportunity," concludes that even on sites with affirmative action programs, men earn as much as 19 times more than women.

"We're nowhere near economic equity for women in construction," said Lauren Sugerman, executive director of CWIT. "We've made some progress since the early 1980s, when there were almost no women construction workers, but we need more programs like these."

The report surveyed six construction sites with affirmative action programs: the U.S. Post Office, McCormick Place expansion, the Cook County Jail and the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, all in Chicago; the Gateway Stadium and Arena in Cleveland; and the Portland bridge project in Portland, Maine.

The Cook County Jail and Juvenile Detention Center projects had the lowest participation goals, only 5 percent, and were the only ones to exceed the goals. The goals for hours to be worked by women on the four other projects ranged from 6.9 percent to 15 percent, none of which were achieved, but the number of hours women worked increased at three of the projects — the Post Office, McCormick Place and the Gateway Stadium.

The Portland bridge project was the most effective in meeting the goal, the report said. It benefited from advance planning, a political climate that accepts women in nontraditional work, a long-term relationship between tradeswomen groups and the Department of Transportation, support from the highest levels of the DoT and high goals for women, the report said.

With a goal of 15 percent participation by female workers, the project offered a child-care facility that cost workers no more than 15 percent of their salaries.

None of the six projects placed women equally across all trades, the report said. Instead, there was a heavy concentration of women as carpenters, electricians and laborers. These trades account for more than half the hours worked for men and women combined on most projects. Other important trades, such as iron workers, have high numbers of hours on a site, but include few women in their ranks.

At each site, unions and organizations representing people of color were able to get employers to increase the numbers of hours worked by women by insisting that contractors comply with goals throughout the life of the project, the report said. Traditionally, contractors were not penalized until the end of a project.

In spite of these aggressive efforts, on five of the projects for every one year worked by tradeswomen, tradesmen worked 16 years or more. Only in Maine did men only work 10 years for every one year worked by women.

"Unions are critical in the process," CWIT Policy Consultant Laurie LeBreton noted, "to ensure better recruitment of women and fair hiring practices."

Women's membership in unions has increased in the last two decades, from 28 percent in 1977 to 40 percent in 1995. But such traditionally male-dominated trades as construction still have relatively few women.

Only 3 percent of workers in construction trades nationwide are women. Prior to 1980, women made up less than 1 percent of the construction work force.

In Chicago, tradeswomen make up 1.4 percent of the city's construction work force, but this figure does not reflect their interest in the trades. According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security, 19 percent of the applicants for construction apprenticeships are women.

"Women are a valuable addition to the work force," said Robert Georgine, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department. "More than a third of the students in engineering and related fields are women, so now women are entering trades at various levels."

Besides advance planning and the involvement of tradeswomen's organizations, the report concludes that effective affirmative action programs must include systems to ensure adequate numbers of female workers and an equitable workplace, resources for on-site staff and services, a team approach to monitoring and compliance, monitoring to ensure that goals are met and an active strategy for achieving the goal.

ORGANIZING

Toma-Tek cited by NLRB

The National Labor Relations Board has charged Toma-Tek tomato processing plant in Firebaugh, Calif., with a series of complaints in its efforts to block union representation.

"Toma-Tek terrorized workers who tried to exercise their democratic right to join a union," said Teamsters President Ron Carey.

The workers voted to join IBT Local 746 in August 1995, but 30 ballots were challenged, leaving the election outcome in question. The NLRB cited violations by the company that include discrimination, suspension, discharge and threats against workers if they voted for the union.

"Toma-Tek workers organized to fight for safe working conditions and a better standard of living," said Esperanza Torres, a volunteer organizer. "Toma-Tek has violated their basic rights as human beings."

SEIU shows union edge

Even before they vote on union representation, home care workers in San Francisco will receive their first wage increase in 20 years, thanks to the Service Employees.

SEIU Local 250 and other organizations convinced the state legislature to pass special legislation allowing the city to spend the money for raises that was included in the current budget. The salaries rose by 15 percent effective Jan. 1. Workers had been receiving the minimum wage of $4.25 an hour through the city's social service department.

SEIU has been seeking to organize the in-home workers for the past two years. A representation vote is set for sometime in February.

IUD organizing focuses on grass roots

By Muriel H. Cooper

The AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department has taken its successful 1994 national organizing conference on the road, bringing together labor and grass-roots coalitions to fight for worker rights and economic justice.

The national conference recognized that the best resources for organizing workers often come from the communities where workers live and work. That prompted the IUD to schedule a series of regional conferences to build relationships with local coalitions.

"Working together, we can reverse the downward trend of living standards, raise more Americans out of poverty and improve the quality of life in our communities," IUD President Elmer Chatak told the gathering in Atlanta, site of the Southern regional conference.

The Northeast conference, held in September in Boston, explored organizing experiments and models that included the Teamster and AFT drives to organize health professionals in Rhode Island, and the Massachusetts Merrimack Valley Project that was designed to save and create jobs and bring investments to one of the oldest industrial areas in the nation.

The Jan. 12 Atlanta conference centered on voter registration and participation, and also took aim at the Georgia congressman who as U.S. House speaker has spearheaded the Republicans' "Contract on America."

"We will not permit Newt Gingrich to destroy Medicare, Medicaid and college loans while giving corporate America and the rich one more tax break," AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson told the conference.

"The theme of this conference — organizing and coalition-building — could not be more timely," she said. "Today, our challenge is to gain strength from that commonality to overcome our shared plight. We will win by reaching out to each other."

> *"Working together, we can reverse the downward trend of living standards . . . and improve the quality of life in our communities."*
>
> **— IUD President Elmer Chatak**

The opposition clearly is well organized and well-heeled, said IUD Organizing Director Joe Uehlein. "We are in an economic war with anti-union forces and we must act accordingly," he said.

The conferences include representatives from religious, environmental, Native American, women's, farm workers, contingent workers and civil rights groups.

The Atlanta conference also included a rally at Georgia's state capitol to protest cuts in Medicaid, privatization of state jobs and the abolishment of the merit system.

About 300 workers, including several busloads of Service Employees, participated in the march and a spontaneous prayer session in Gov. Zell Miller's (D) office.

"Labor supported the governor because he campaigned against privatization," said Rev. James Orange, an organizing coordinator with IUD. "Now that he is a lame-duck governor, he has gotten gung-ho on privatization, something that he gave his word that he would not do. A lot of the jobs that are in question are the blue-collar jobs that workers depend on," he said.

The IUD is planning its West and Midwest conferences for early spring.

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Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

AFGE President John N. Sturdivant addresses federal and District of Columbia workers as members of Congress listen during a meeting to discuss the recent shutdowns of the federal government.

Workers call hearing on shutdown

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

A congressional town hall meeting Jan. 25 sponsored by Government Employees District 14 drew 10 members of Congress from the metropolitan Washington area, all of whom clearly were aware of the warning by federal workers, their constituents, that they "will remember in November."

In a jam-packed hearing room in the Rayburn House Office Building, about 500 federal and D.C. workers heard Republicans and Democrats alike praise federal workers, some shift the blame and others call for pickets around the Capitol if the government is shut down again.

The 10 members were Sens. Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), John W. Warner (R-Va.) and Paul S. Sarbanes (D-Md.); Reps. Albert Wynn (D-Md.), Thomas M. Davis III (R-Va.), Constance A. Morella (R-Md.), Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.), Frank R. Wolf (R-Va.) and James P. Moran (D-Va.); and Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.)

AFGE President John N. Sturdivant applauded the workers for showing up in large numbers but reminded them the battle is not over. "This momentum must continue through the November elections and beyond."

Mikulski mentioned legislation she supported that would have prohibited pay for members of Congress during the shutdown. "We're federal employees too," she said. "What happens to you happens to us."

Hoyer brought the workers to their feet as he declared, "A whole lot of federal employees were hurt, but we need to send a message to every federal employee to speak up, join up and let people know you are not to be held hostage."

For D.C., the injustice was doubled, said Norton. "They not only shut down the federal government, they shut down my home town."

Warner, Wolf and Moran recalled their days as federal workers and pointed to that experience as one of the reasons why they support the workers.

But when it came time for the members to listen, only Morella and Davis bothered to stay for less than 30 minutes of dialogue with the workers, who endured more than an hour of speeches following their eight-hour work days.

AFGE Local 12 Steward Joseph C. Bush told the representatives that the shutdowns have "measurably eroded our morale and dedication. In my 34 years of service at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, I have never experienced the situation as it is now."

Another government worker, Aleta Hicks, likened the shutdown to a form of slavery. "I got no pay. Master said, 'do as I say, not as I do' . . . because they got paid. Do not give them the right to do this to you," she said as she turned to the union members.

As the final buzzer sounded for a vote on the continuing resolution to fund the government beyond Jan. 26, several union members wanted to be heard and offered to wait into the night to talk to Davis and Morella.

Davis, who took copious notes, urged the union members to continue to organize and to let people across the country know their plight.

Also participating in the town hall meeting were federal workers represented by AFSCME Council 26, whose president, Timothy J. Johnson, declared, "as long as our agencies are not given adequate funding to serve the American people, our work is not done."

NLRB reprieve means return to huge backlog

By Mike Hall

With congressional Republicans abandoning their strategy to force a third government shutdown in an attempt to impose their budget priorities on the White House, a continuing resolution was passed to fund the government through March 15.

Clinton consistently has vetoed bills that included Republican-sponsored measures to cut Medicare, Medicaid and education to pay for tax cuts for the rich, and the budget fight was expected to continue threatening programs important to working families.

Almost all the employees working at agencies covered by the resolution could still be furloughed without pay because most of the agencies are funded at much lower levels than last year. The continuing resolution includes funding for departments and agencies covered by the six appropriations bills that are at the center of the disagreement between Clinton and the Republicans.

As a result of last-minute negotiations, however, a provision was added to prevent furloughs at the National Labor Relations Board. Workers there now are trying to catch up on cases delayed by the shutdowns.

The shutdowns forced the cancellation of about 250 representation elections and 350 unfair labor practice and representation hearings. During the three-week shutdown, 720 new unfair labor practice charges and 120 representation petitions were filed, but were not processed while the agency was shut.

"The aftermath of the shutdown will be felt by the public for months to come in terms of delays. In a broader sense, the rule of law was weakened by the breakdown of well-established, orderly procedures to solve workplace disputes," NLRB Chairman William B. Gould and General Counsel Fred Feinstein said in a joint statement.

The shutdown is expected to add months to the resolution of cases now pending in NLRB field offices, and nearly double the number of cases that take more than 45 months to resolve.

The board itself was in limbo during the shutdown. While it met and decided cases, it was unable to issue those decisions because the workers responsible for editing and printing those decisions were furloughed.

If a budget compromise is not reached between Clinton and the Republicans before the continuing resolution expires, Congress has a number of options. It could pass additional temporary spending bills until the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30, giving the Republicans the opportunity to once again shut down the government or to make deeper cuts in spending.

Fewer inspections dangerous legacy of budget battle

Continued from Page 1

A bulletin on the 1996 funding outlook issued by the Department of Labor states that uncertain funding levels could mean:

- Fewer inspections.
- Lack of prevention as those employers who act only in response to the threat of enforcement take advantage of a crippled federal job safety program.
- Less compliance assistance.
- Slower response time.
- Neglect of emerging workplace hazards, like tuberculosis and carcinogenic chemicals.

The combination of furloughs and a nearly 16 percent cut in funds (compared with fiscal year 1995 levels) provided under the continuing resolutions also means the nearly 2,200-member OSHA work force faces an uncertain future. Since nearly two-thirds of the agency's funds go toward salaries and benefits, Dear said, personnel cuts might be necessary.

Agency officials are looking at unpaid furloughs of 35 or more days between now and Sept. 30, or laying off more than 600 employees, to keep under budget. If a deal can be brokered between President Clinton and the Republican-led Congress, more money might be available, officials say.

The funding crunch that spurred dramatic cuts in workplace inspections and employer training also has had an effect on the 23 states that run their own job safety and health programs — but rely on federal funding to help pay for those operations. While the exact effect is unclear, funding levels have been reduced.

Ergonomics epidemic

Ergonomics remains a hot topic despite GOP efforts to delay development of a new rule, including an outright ban included in the budget rescission package passed in 1995.

A group of 51 doctors and medical researchers urged Congress Jan. 24 to lift those restrictions and allow OSHA to move forward with a rule covering repetitive trauma disorders, the fastest-growing category of injury and illness.

In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, ergonomics-related disorders have increased by 800 percent over the last decade.

That letter was released in response to an industry-sponsored group that attacked OSHA's scientific methods on the subject and supported a continued ban.

"We urge you to remove any restrictions from pending legislation that would prevent OSHA to proceed with the development and issuance of a proposed regulation in order to allow this much-needed public debate to continue," said the letter, sent to each member of Congress.

"We urge you not to be swayed by the opinion of a small group of individuals who may be acting on an agenda other than the health and safety of working Americans," the letter stated.

In the meantime, workers and their allies continue to set strategy for working against House and Senate measures threatening job safety.

For example, the Citizens for Sensible Safeguards coalition held a one-day workshop for leaders in late January, focusing on regulatory reform and measures still alive in Congress.

The fight over regulatory reform is "not a fight about costs and benefits, economic analyses and risk assessments," said Keith Mestrich of the AFL-CIO's Occupational Safety and Health Department. "It's not about supermandates.

"It's a fight about clean water and safe workplaces, about equal rights and equal access, about safe schools and safe consumer products," he said.

Congress fails American working families, children

By Colleen M. O'Neill

As far as America's children and working families go, the Republican leadership in Congress has failed miserably, said Rep. William L. Clay (D-Mo.), ranking member of the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee.

Clay's straight-F report card for the GOP majority is no surprise to working families and their representatives, who continue to document those failures nationwide through Legislative Action Committee meetings, job safety rallies and other grass-roots activities.

"Even Republicans who have in previous years supported working families have deserted us now that the GOP has seized control of Congress," AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor told the Executive Council Jan. 24. "Of the 11 with previous voting records between 50 percent and 84 percent, 10 dropped to between 8 percent and 33 percent, and only one achieved 50 percent."

Clay pointed out that the first and foremost responsibility of the education and labor committee "is to strive to improve America's schools, as well as the standard of living of America's working families."

"On both accounts, Republicans flunked," he said. "The first session was a disaster for education and working families. Voters won't forget that next fall when they're deciding whether to promote this majority to the next Congress."

Specifically, Clay's "Failing Grade for Failing America's Children and Working Families: Report Card on the First Year of the Republican Revolution" scored the GOP committee members with failing grades for their actions and inaction with regard to education, union organizing, wages, pensions, job safety and health and training.

On the education front, House Republicans proposed to cut education programs by $3.7 billion in 1996 alone, while abolishing the Goals 2000 program, a nationwide blueprint on education developed under the Bush and Clinton administrations.

The GOP also proposed to eliminate the National School Lunch Program, the Federal Direct Student Loan Program and the AmeriCorps program, which helps nearly 50,000 young people earn money toward a college education while serving their communities.

The new majority turned its back on the shrinking middle class, finding no time in its busy schedule for hearings on the declining real wages of America's working families — or the growing wage gap undermining the nation's middle class.

In fact, Clay noted, the Republicans opposed an increase in the minimum wage, and even went so far as to propose to eliminate it for certain workers, along with overtime protections.

Also targeted were prevailing wage protections, with GOP members supporting repeal, and the National Labor Relations Board, which was threatened with major funding cuts.

Clay noted the Republicans' vociferous attacks on the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively, as they sought to weaken protections provided to workers wrongfully fired for seeking to unionize and attacked President Clinton's executive order banning the use of permanent replacement workers by government contractors.

The attack on pensions came on two fronts, with the GOP seeking to let corporations skim "overages" in company funds for use at their discretion, while approving a 7 percent cut in the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration.

House Republicans also showed complete disdain for the life and safety of workers, Clay said, through the introduction of and support for legislation to gut the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Those measures would effectively eliminate the employer's responsibility to provide a safe workplace and turn OSHA "into a toothless tiger that would merely 'consult' with employers."

Clay attacked the GOP view of job safety, under which OSHA could issue only warnings instead of citations and penalties when employers violate laws — except in the case of fatalities or severe injuries. In this scenario, employers who deliberately break the law would be treated the same as those who make an honest mistake.

He also scored the majority party for its attempts to close the Mine Safety and Health Administration and severely cut the funding for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the only federal agency conducting job safety and health research.

Clay's report only touched on those items under his panel's jurisdiction, and thus left the GOP attacks on Medicare and Medicaid funding to others. A panel of witnesses told a hearing convened by Democratic lawmakers just what devastation would ensue from those program cuts.

Specifically, said Eugene Glover of the National Council of Senior Citizens, the proposals would force senior citizens into managed-care plans and away from the doctors who have been treating them for many years — with such plans seeking the healthier patients and leaving the rest in an underfunded plan.

Converting Medicaid into a block grant without making provisions for current recipients would be a disaster, Glover warned, because the bulk of the program's money pays for elderly care. Medicaid now bans impoverishment of spouses or families to pay for a nursing home patient's costs, but the Republican measure would lift that ban.

Likewise, block grants would throw children off the rolls, forcing parents to seek health care in hospital emergency rooms or go without, said Dr. Peter Beilenson, the Baltimore city health commissioner. He said that "unless you have healthy kids, and unless they can go to school healthy, they will not get an education and you will never turn out a stable work force."

Bonior: Wages, jobs being ignored

By David Kameras

Suggesting that national debate has been focused too narrowly on balancing the budget, House Minority Whip David E. Bonior (D-Mich.) insisted that greater attention must be paid to the impact stagnant wages and job-stealing trade agreements are having on the American worker.

"If we don't find new ways to raise the wages of the 80 percent of America that is standing still or falling behind — if we don't address that issue directly, which the balanced budget doesn't do and can't really do — this nation is not going to fulfill the promise of the future," he told an Economic Policy Institute conference.

"Even if we get a good budget deal — one that protects Medicare and Medicaid, one that protects education and the environment — it will have little effect on the day-to-day struggles that individual American families are facing today and will face in the next decade," Bonior said.

"Put simply: If we are going to slay the fiscal and economic dragon challenging American families today, then a balanced budget and a frank discussion of wages must be two edges of the same sword," he said.

The AFL-CIO is planning to take the wage issue to the American people during the presidential campaign, holding hearings around the country during the primary elections. "No other issue has more potential to spotlight the need for strong unions," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

New data from the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis indicates that personal income rose only 0.2 percent in November, with wages and salaries actually deflating by 0.1 percent, continuing a long trend of steadily eroding wages. Yet Republicans in Congress still tenaciously resist Democratic efforts to boost the federal minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 an hour over two years.

With median household income flat for two decades, 67 percent of those surveyed say the U.S. economy is stagnating or declining, according to a recent U.S. News poll. The political implications for this election year are enormous. According to Republican pollster Ed Goeas, the wage issue "has the potential to blow through the roof."

In some instances, states have taken up the slack. The Delaware Senate Jan. 23 joined the House in supporting an increase in the state's minimum wage to $5 by 1997. Gov. Thomas R. Carper (D) has promised to sign it into law. Earlier, in Massachusetts, the legislature passed a minimum wage increase over the veto of Gov. William Weld (R).

> *"This isn't just a question of economics. This is a question of values. This is about work. This is about family. This is about community."*
>
> **— House Minority Whip David E. Bonior, on the widening wage gap.**

Bonior noted that the average CEO today makes 135 times as much as the average worker, 225 times as much at the top 10 corporations, and asked, "How do we explain that? How do we explain that at a time when productivity is climbing, and profits reached record highs, and CEO salaries reached all-time highs and the stock market reached all-time highs, that the wage growth of average working people reached all-time lows?"

"This isn't just a question of economics," he said. "This is a question of values. This is about work. This is about family. This is about community."

"Our challenge is clear, and John Sweeney is right: America needs a raise, and it deserves a raise," he said.

Bonior offered five suggestions on how to meet that challenge:

- Make education the first priority, with emphasis on school-to-work.
- Make work pay. Raise the minimum wage.
- Encourage corporate America to do its fair share — to value work, family and community, and do away with corporate welfare.
- Make sure trade agreements strengthen labor and environmental standards.
- Empower American workers, giving them a greater stake and voice in their workplaces, and ban striker replacements.

"Let's enforce our labor laws and make it clear that unfair labor practices will not be tolerated," Bonior said. "The right to organize is a fundamental American right, and our laws should reflect that."

Trade agreements close in on workers

The United States must ensure that labor standards are maintained in international trade agreements, House Minority Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.) told the Economic Policy Institute.

"History has shown that if we don't address the environment, wages and working conditions directly in our trade agreements, they're likely not to get addressed at all," he said.

That history includes the North American Free Trade Agreement, which has accelerated the flight of U.S. capital south of the border, resulting in lost jobs and depressed wages here at home.

A major relocation firm reported that Mexico has become the top destination for transferring executives, with Chile, which has never been in the top 10 but is now the subject of a proposed NAFTA expansion, holding the No. 2 slot.

As of Jan. 22, the Labor Department had received petitions for NAFTA trade adjustment assistance from 768 firms in 48 states. Certifications have been made in 380 cases covering more than 53,000 workers, but the actual number of workers dislocated by the pact has been estimated to be much higher.

Anger over NAFTA and a recent threat of sanctions against the United States by the multilateral World Trade Organization have fueled concern about trade policy.

"It is outrageous that American citizens should be dictated to by the World Trade Organization and told to change our laws to lower standards," declared Electronic Workers President William Bywater in response to the WTO's determination that the Clean Air Act discriminates against foreign oil refineries.

Not all of the criticism is coming from the United States. As a result of a complaint lodged by the Mexican government, the Labor Department's National Administrative Office, created under NAFTA to review labor violations, will hear Feb. 27 in San Francisco from workers who charge that a Sprint Corp. subsidiary there targeted at Spanish-speaking customers was abruptly shut down to avert a union representation election.

— David Kameras

Labor boosts Wyden to win in Oregon vote

'Unparalleled' campaign provides model for 1996

By James B. Parks

Organized labor celebrated two key political victories in Oregon. The first was playing a major role in electing Democrat Ron Wyden to the Senate and the second was putting to a successful test its new political organizing ideas.

"Working families and their unions made the difference in electing the first Democratic senator from Oregon since 1962," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said. "We put together an unparalleled political effort.

"The Oregon race provides a vital first chapter in a new textbook on politics we're going to write this year, as we recruit and train activists to build the core of a powerful new grass-roots movement to improve the lives of American working families," Sweeney said.

This campaign was a model in coalition-building with environmentalists, women's and other progressive groups, AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal said. Those coalitions will be critical in helping labor win other political battles in Oregon, including the race to fill the state's other Senate seat, being vacated by Mark O. Hatfield (R), and the fight against a so-called "right-to-work" ballot initiative spawned by the anti-union National Right to Work Committee.

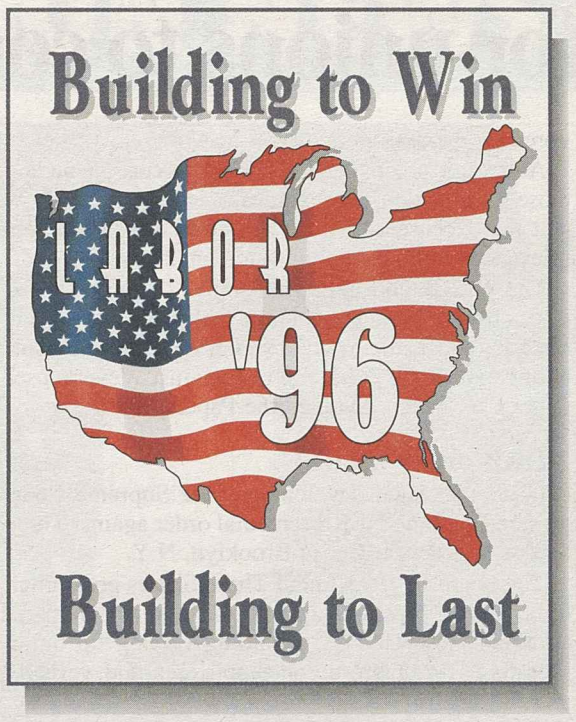
Preliminary numbers indicate that labor's efforts were crucial to Wyden's narrow victory in the nation's first-ever mail ballot for a congressional seat, Sweeney noted. There are more than 120,000 registered union voters in Oregon and, in some counties, union member turnout was as much as 11 percent higher than the overall level of 65 percent.

Wyden's margin was about 17,000 votes. Unofficial results showed Wyden had 568,335 votes (48 percent), while conservative Republican Gordon Smith had 551,103 (47 percent), and four other candidates divided the remainder. Smith, a millionaire businessman and state senate president, outspent Wyden by $1.1 million, supplying $2 million out of his own pocket.

The extensive labor effort culminated during the last days of the campaign with a visit from AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, who kicked off a labor walk by 120 volunteers in five inches of snow to canvass for Wyden. Then Trumka and Wyden joined a Machinists picket line and toured various other union work sites.

The weekend before, Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson led a mass campaign rally for Wyden and held press conferences with working women.

The federation sent Deputy Political Director Richard Walsh and 12 staff members to Oregon, supplemented by 25 staff members from affiliates, to organize labor's effort for Wyden. More than 500 union members volunteered to help with the campaign, many of them participating in labor walks each weekend.



The unions tracked members who had voted by regularly checking records at local elections offices, then concentrated their phone calls and mailings on those who had not yet mailed in their ballots.

The staff and volunteers worked intensely to boost voter turnout, Sweeney said, making more than 230,000 phone calls and sending more than 350,000 pieces of informational literature to every union member in Oregon. More than 50 affiliates and locals mailed thousands of additional pieces to their members, all spotlighting the candidates' positions on issues that affect working families, women and retirees.

The mailings included brochures that compared the candidates' positions on the minimum wage, worker safety, Medicare, support for the middle class, education cuts and environmental protection.

One brochure told union members they could "cast the deciding vote" on the budget deadlock and "send the politicians in Washington a message about the kind of future we deserve."

Another urged people who have been building their retirement nest egg for decades not to "let the fox (Smith and 'his pal' Newt Gingrich) into the hen house," while another warned women that Smith's views on education, the environment and sexual harassment would mean "trouble" for their families.

In addition, Frontlash, the AFL-CIO's youth arm, and the National Council of Senior Citizens sent staff to help mobilize younger and older voters.

Campaign advertising included radio ads purchased by the Teamsters that attacked Smith for health and safety violations at the frozen food company he owns.

Wyden, an eight-term member of Congress, who had a 95 percent COPE voting record in 1995, "wore his union label on his lapel and won," Sweeney said. In the last weeks of the campaign, Walsh said, Wyden made a strong bid for union votes. He visited a shipyard, a Steelworkers work site and a hospital organized by AFSCME.

Wyden said his victory bodes well for those who support policies to help working families. "This race does have national implications. Oregonians are saying that this Congress is too extreme on a number of key issues," he said.

Political training, education set to energize workers

Continued from Page 1

perspective, and none had higher than a 42 percent record, Taylor noted, "the priority of these new legislators this year has been to destroy government."

McEntee, who pledged full participation by AFSCME in the coordinated AFL-CIO campaign, portrayed the "Gingrich Revolution" in similarly dire terms. "What we face, and continue to face, is literally the destruction of the American labor movement, of unions as we know them — in fact, of the American middle class."

Labor's biggest political problem is the lack of understanding among union members about what is at stake, said Gerald M. Shea, Sweeney's assistant for governmental affairs.

"This gulf means our effort to involve our members in politics fell short in 1994" when the conservative Republicans gained congressional majorities, he said.

To reconnect union members to political action, the transition work group said, the federation should equip union staff at the congressional district level to educate union families and establish a National Labor Political Training Center to develop union campaigners, create educational materials for members and work with the affiliates to provide polling and research.

The immediate goal of the training center would be to provide an intensive week on campaign management and skills for 100 union activists and staff, who would be assigned to key state and local campaign positions, Rosenthal said.

Two- and three-day sessions would be given to another 2,500 activists to get out the vote in the last six weeks of the campaign.

"We want to have staff on the ground in 75 districts in February or March," Rosenthal said, "a minimum of one per district and hopefully as many as four. We need to go into every local union in the district, into members' homes. We hope that affiliates can put together 75 to 300 staff people for the campaign."

By campaign's end, "we're looking for 10,000 activists to work in 36 to 42 key states," he said. "We plan to enlist the rank and file to help."

For the longer term, Rosenthal said, the federation should build a permanent base of at least 100 union activists in each congressional district for grass-roots political and legislative action.

"What we need to do is to put together a long-lasting campaign, going through the 1996 elections and beyond," he said. "It's a matter of strengthening our state organizations, building permanent grass-roots committees."

State federations were given regional representation on the AFL-CIO General Board, which decides political endorsements, by a constitutional amendment approved by the 1995 convention. The council effectively implemented that change with a statement setting up procedures for that regional selection.

One representative will be selected by each administrative region — East, Midwest, South and West — no later than Feb. 15. The General Board is expected to meet to consider endorsements for president and vice president in March.

The council also approved rules for the General Board that include a provision urging affiliates to hold off individual endorsements until the board meets.

In other action:

- Sweeney appointed a committee to review 1995 convention resolutions referred to the Executive Council. Chaired by Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, the committee includes James J. Norton of the Graphic Communications Union, Jake West of the Ironworkers, William Lucy of AFSCME and Gloria Johnson of the Electronic Workers.
- The council agreed that the 1997 AFL-CIO convention would be held in Pittsburgh.
- The winter meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla., set for Feb. 19-22, will be the last to be held in that city, the traditional meeting place for decades. Sweeney said he planned to move the winter meeting around to a number of sites.

AFL-CIO looks to constituency groups

AFL-CIO executive officers met with constituency groups to discuss how to involve them more directly in federation programs and policy.

The meeting followed a report by the Executive Council Committee on Full Participation that recommended "consultation with the constituency groups in areas where they have expertise or issues that heavily impact the communities they represent."

The constituency groups include the A. Philip Randolph Institute, Coalition of Labor Union Women, National Council of Senior Citizens, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance and Frontlash.

Officers from those groups met Jan. 31 with AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

Government Employees President John N. Sturdivant, chair of the Full Participation Committee, told the council that the full-participation conference held in conjunction with the 1995 AFL-CIO convention was a rousing success, and that the constituency groups had urged the federation to sponsor the conference on an ongoing basis.

"The continuation of full-participation conferences would reaffirm the AFL-CIO's commitment to women, people of color and youth and promote multiethnic alliances with labor," he said.

Sturdivant also presented a preliminary draft of recommendations from the conference on such issues as organizing, immigration, worker rights, affirmative action and leadership development.

The leaders of the constituency groups also are in the process of formulating a common agenda, including a civil rights agenda to be developed in cooperation with the AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

NLRB sets rules for unions to comply with Beck

By James B. Parks

Organized labor is objecting to new rules set by the National Labor Relations Board for unions to follow in informing workers of their rights under the Supreme Court's Beck decision.

It was the NLRB's first decision on how to implement the high court's 1988 ruling in Communications Workers vs. Beck, which said employees working under union security agreements may decline formal union membership and may object to paying dues for activities not related to collective bargaining, contract administration or grievances.

"Perhaps the most significant — and distressing — aspect of the decision is the holding that unions have a legal obligation to affirmatively tell employees that they do not have to become union members," AFL-CIO General Counsel Jon Hiatt said.

"The notice requirement . . . is not only contrary to established judicial interpretations of the Labor Act, it is grossly one-sided. Employers — even those who run active anti-union campaigns — are under no obligation to inform their workers of their right to form and join a union," Hiatt said.

Mark Schneider, associate general counsel for the Machinists, who argued the case before the NLRB, said the IAM would appeal that portion of the ruling.

In its ruling handed down Jan. 29, the NLRB approved most of the system IAM uses to inform workers of their rights not to join a union or pay dues for certain activities. The board specifically approved the practice of putting a clearly identifiable notice in the union magazine to notify members of their rights.

In an important victory for labor, however, the board ruled that unions are not required to calculate separate dues-reduction costs for each bargaining unit, a time-consuming and expensive practice favored by the anti-union "right-to-work" advocates.

As a result, unions can spread various costs, including those for litigation, among units as long as it can show that the expense is germane to collective bargaining, grievances or contract administration, the NLRB said.

The NLRB consolidated about 125 Beck-related issues from around the country in the case of California Saw and Knife Works, which included the complaint against the IAM, and one against Weyerhauser Paper Co., which involved the Paperworkers.

NLRB order upheld

In another legal development, the Supreme Court let stand a strong NLRB remedial order against Three Sisters Sportswear Co. in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The board in 1993 found Three Sisters committed unfair labor practices against the Ladies' Garment Workers, now UNITE, including ripping up union literature, firing pro-union employees and verbally and physically assaulting others.

The NLRB ruled that Three Sisters was an alter-ego of another company, Southland Metro, which had been found liable for similar acts in 1980. Because of the previous violations, the NLRB ordered the company to allow the union access into nonwork areas and to have a company official read the board order or be present when it was read.

"Motor-voter" law upheld

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court rejected California's challenge to the federal "motor voter" law, which lets people register to vote while getting a driver's license and other government services.

The justices let stand a lower court ruling in Wilson vs. Voting Rights Coalition that the law does not unduly restrict states' rights. The AFL-CIO strongly backed the law, formally known as the National Voter Registration Act, which has added more than 5 million people to voter registration rolls since it took effect last year.

The justices also announced they would review three labor relations cases, including Merrill vs. Barbour, which involves whether punitive damages should be awarded in every case where intentional race discrimination is found.

The second case, Auciello Iron Works vs. NLRB, will review a board policy requiring an employer to raise the issue of whether a union represents the majority of its employees before the union accepts a contract offer.

The third, Lockheed Corp. vs. Spink, will determine whether the company violated federal pension protection laws when it asked employees who took advantage of an early retirement plan to waive employment-related claims.

In that case, the court also will decide whether the 1986 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act — which forbids reductions in the rate of benefit accrual based on an employee's age after Jan. 1, 1988 — can be applied retroactively.

Court backs Steelworkers

In another court action, the Steelworkers hailed a decision by a federal district court to drop securities fraud charges against the union filed by Bayou Steel.

"This is the first step in vindicating the Steelworkers' position that Bayou Steel's lawsuit is totally without merit," said USWA Vice President Richard H. Davis.

Bayou filed suit in August 1995 charging the USWA and the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department with securities fraud and violation of federal racketeering laws. Some 200 USWA members have been on strike at the Louisiana company since March 1993.

JOB SAFETY

Butadiene proposal ready

Industry and labor negotiators have reached agreement on a proposed workplace health standard covering 1,3-butadiene.

Representatives of the Steelworkers, Chemical Workers and the International Institute of Synthetic Rubber Producers forwarded their recommendation to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Feb. 1.

Butadiene is a highly flammable gas used in rubber production that has been linked to cancer and such other adverse health effects as kidney and liver disease. A rule proposed by OSHA in August 1990 stated the agency's intention to lower the permissible exposure limit from 1,000 parts per million to 2 ppm. The agreement seeks to cut the final exposure limit to 1 ppm, with specific engineering controls required at 0.5 ppm.

Chemical reduction sought

The Minnesota AFL-CIO and a regional environmental group have joined in a project aimed at reducing the use of toxic chemicals throughout the state.

The pilot Labor/Environment Project will review more than 500 plants across the state to determine which organized ones would welcome assistance in reducing chemical use.

Project organizers cite three main objectives: improving the environment, improving plant working conditions and maintaining jobs.

Steel erection rule drafted

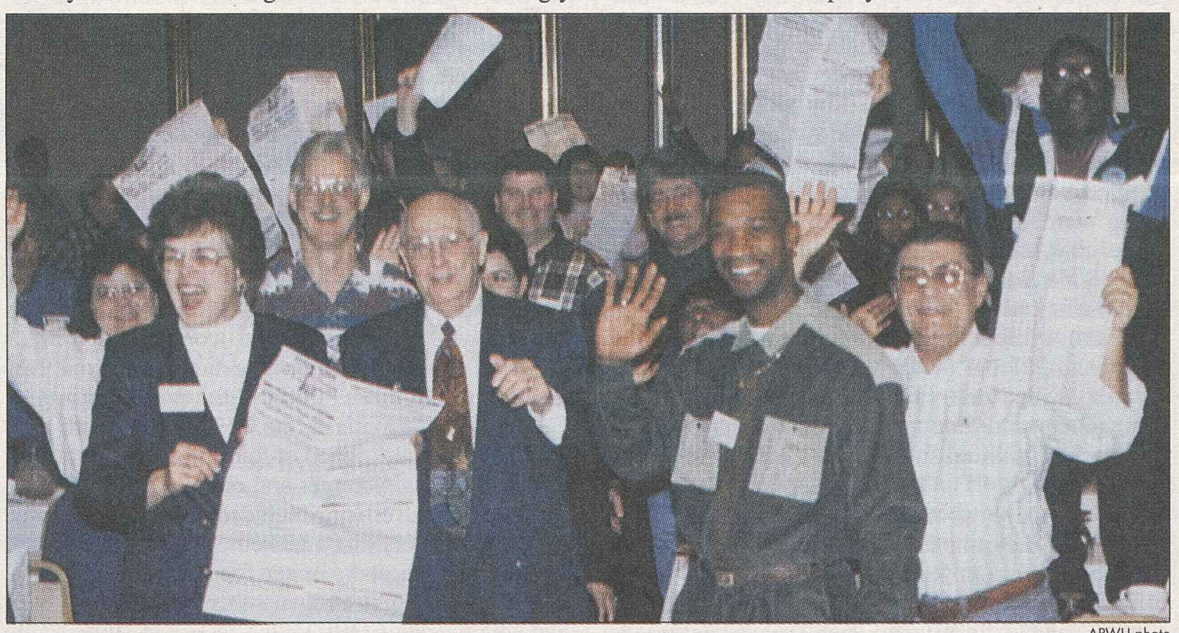
Increased fall protection is key to a recently released draft proposal for a revised steel erection standard.

The proposal would require fall protection for steel erection workers at heights of 15 feet or more, while current standards do not require safety gear until workers are 25 to 30 feet high.

A new study by the University of Utah indicates that the fall-related death rate for the industry over a six-year period was 13 times higher than for the construction industry as a whole and 10 times that of general industry.

Iron Workers President Jake West characterized the proposal as "a major success that permitted those who must abide by a government regulation to help write it."

Representatives of the Iron Workers, Boilermakers, AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, Steelworkers and Operating Engineers were among those who served on the Steel Erection Negotiated Rulemaking Advisory Committee for OSHA.



APWU photo

APWU President Moe Biller joins in a celebration of transitional employees after the union won a $63 million arbitration from the U.S. Postal Service, which was found to have violated the union contract and federal laws.

APWU 'transitionals' get $63 million

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The road to better pay for some 25,000 transitional employees was paved with a strong case built by the Postal Workers, which won an estimated $63 million in back pay for the workers.

"Transitional employees now know the full value of union representation, because APWU has fought like hell for TEs and will continue to do so with all our might, just as we do for all bargaining-unit workers," said APWU President Moe Biller.

"APWU is fully committed to ensuring that TEs continue to receive improvements in their wages and working conditions, and we will continue to fight for career opportunities for all TEs," he said.

Transitional employees are full-time postal workers hired for jobs that may not be permanent. The number of TEs is growing as the agency expands its computerized mail-sorting stations.

In 1993, Postmaster General Marvin T. Runyon ordered the agency to give 70 percent of the jobs in a network of mail-sorting facilities to TEs. Until then, the agency depended on private firms to run the sorting operations, one of the government's biggest operations that is contracted out.

National Labor Relations Board Arbitrator Carlton J. Snow ruled that the U.S. Postal Service violated the union contract and federal law when it failed to increase TE wages after the 1987-1990 cost-of-living adjustment rolled into basic pay on Feb. 4, 1995. The increase should have been included in the TEs' paychecks on Feb. 20, 1995.

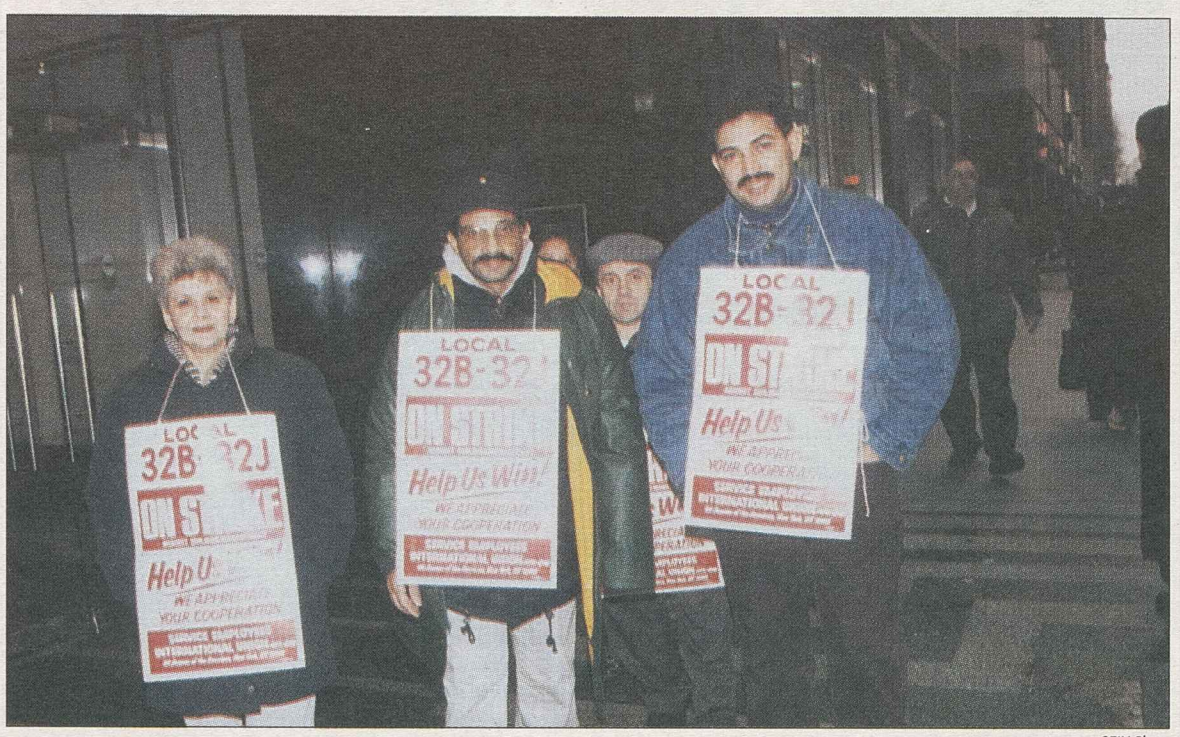
Pointing out that transitionals have no wage scale of their own, and that their pay is linked to that of the part-time flexible employees, Snow ruled that whatever the part-time workers get as base pay is what is due the transitionals.

If the part-timers receive a COLA roll-in, the transitionals must receive the same pay, Snow said. Management has recognized the precise nature of the linkage because it has paid the transitionals the same general increases that the parties negotiated for the part-timers.

The union historically has opposed two-tier wage arrangements and never would have agreed to paying the part-time flexible workers a higher rate than transitional workers, according to APWU.

Under the Jan. 9 ruling, TEs are entitled to be paid $1.26 per hour for every hour worked since the first full pay period in February 1995.

The ruling is the first of two that will resolve how much pay the TEs are to receive. Still pending before the arbitrators is the question of how much future pay and benefits the transitional workers should receive.



SEIU Photo

Building service workers were still on the picket line in New York City but negotiations between Service Employees Local 32B-32J and the association of building owners and managers resumed Jan. 31 after Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich urged the parties to settle. More than 30,000 workers struck Jan. 4 when employers proposed a wage scale that would cut the starting wage for new workers by nearly 40 percent.

Strikers raise stakes in Detroit

Unions, labor board pursue legal remedies

By James B. Parks

The AFL-CIO and striking Detroit newspaper unions stepped up legal pressure on the News and Free Press as the National Labor Relations Board issued a new set of complaints against the papers.

The federation amended its antitrust complaint against the newspapers, asking Attorney General Janet Reno to disallow a proposed shutdown of the Riverfront newspaper printing plant.

The AFL-CIO filed a complaint with the U.S. Justice Department Aug. 15 claiming that Gannett's Detroit News and Knight-Ridder's Detroit Free Press had forfeited their antitrust immunity in 1992 by filing an anti-labor amendment to their joint operating agreement without public comment or permission from the attorney general.

"We will not allow Gannett and Knight-Ridder to close or downsize the Riverfront plant and block a remedy by the Justice Department," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said. "The Detroit newspapers abused their monopoly for the purpose of union-busting, and that plant is necessary to preserve competition."

"The Detroit newspapers were granted a special license to do what other competitors go to jail for — collectively setting the prices in newspapers and advertising," said Donald Baker, the federation's special council in the case. "We believe they lost that immunity and must now compete . . . To do that, they need competitive printing capacity, and therefore the Riverfront plant must be preserved intact."

Also on the legal front, the NLRB issued a new consolidated unfair labor practice complaint against the newspapers, with five additional charges, including one that the papers illegally threatened to "permanently replace" strikers.

The complaint, which will be heard Feb. 26, also includes charges that the papers imposed a merit pay proposal on most staff members, failed to provide The Newspaper Guild with information on the merit pay plan, failed to provide details of a plan for salary in lieu of overtime pay and assigned Detroit News staff to television appearances without extra pay.

Meanwhile, five major auto dealers have pulled their ads from the scab newspapers, bringing to more than 90 the number of dealers that have dropped out and to more than 800 the total number of advertisers that have deserted the papers.

To highlight the revenue and ad losses, striking workers held a "Red-Ink Day" Jan. 31 as Gannett and Knight-Ridder prepared to release fourth-quarter financial results expected to show continued huge losses. Union members distributed free red pens, along with an informational flier during the lunch hour.

The employees of the News and Free Press, who have been on strike since July 13, brought thousands of undelivered copies of the News and Free Press to a major advertiser Jan. 25 to demonstrate that the scab papers are not reaching consumers.

The unbundled, never-distributed papers were collected from newspaper dumps and recycling facilities around Detroit. The papers were delivered by striking workers to Southfield Chrysler Plymouth, an auto dealer that continues to place ads in the scab papers.

Actors' Equity, theaters begin talks

Actors' Equity has begun negotiations with 64 theaters in major cities and states to replace an agreement that expires Feb. 25.

Regional and repertory theaters in 29 states are members of the League of Resident Theatres, including the Lincoln Center Theatre and the Roundabout Theatre Company in New York City, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, the American Repertory Theatre near Boston, Arena Stage in Washington, The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, Seattle Repertory Company and the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery.

Some 7,000 actors have worked in those venues under the current three-year agreement. LORT theaters provided 20 percent of all stage-acting jobs for union members last year — second only to the percentage of jobs worked under the production contract (Broadway and touring companies), which was 26.5 percent.

"We are entering important negotiations," said Alan Eisenberg, the union's executive secretary. "These theaters play significant cultural roles in our major cities, yet they must dramatically improve their working conditions for our professional actors and stage managers who are not earning livable wages and benefits."

Under the existing pact, actors make a minimum of $441 to $592 weekly, with the typical play or musical enjoying an eight-week run.

The negotiations are crucial to the actors involved, Eisenberg noted, because the median annual earning for a stage actor is $5,368.

Actors' Equity represents 35,000 members nationwide.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

CWA assesses model strategy at Bell Atlantic

By Colleen M. O'Neill

The Communications Workers released full details of the tentative three-year pact with Bell Atlantic — and revealed the extent of success they enjoyed in their campaign to bring home a contract worthy of consideration.

The settlement, subject to ratification by CWA's 36,500 Bell Atlantic members, "meets our major goals in bargaining throughout the telecommunications industry — access to future jobs, a fair wage and benefit package and protection of retiree health care," said CWA President Morton Bahr.

The union noted that its advertising campaign was seen and heard by millions of people in the mid-Atlantic region, and included specific efforts to target members of Congress and shareholders.

At a cost of approximately $7 million, CWA spent the equivalent of one week's worth of strike benefits for their members, Bahr said — thus achieving its goal of a fair and equitable contract without incurring the draining expenses of an extended strike.

That strategy worked, Bahr told the Executive Council during its Jan. 24 meeting, pointing out that had members gone to the picket line, the pressure to settle after several weeks would have been intense.

Instead, he said, the pressure was on Bell Atlantic to settle and get CWA to pull its ads, which focused on the specter of a rich company forcing loyal retirees to pay for health care and seeking to rely on excessive subcontracting that threatened the quality of service.

CWA's last major strike was in 1989, after unsuccessful negotiations with NYNEX. Some 50,000 workers were on the picket line for 17 weeks, but the union's strike benefits were not at the current level of $200 per week per worker.

Had that benefit been in effect during the NYNEX strike, officials said, the cost would have been $10 million per week, for a total of $170 million.

Specifically, Bahr defined for the council his union's efforts against Bell Atlantic in several areas:

- Television spots reached 5.8 million people who saw the various ads an average of 22 times.
- Radio spots reached about 3.7 million people who heard them an average of 50-60 times.
- Some 125 print ads were run in major city and business newspapers, as well as those on Capitol Hill, with a combined circulation of just under 4 million.
- Billboard and transit ads were concentrated in Philadelphia and Washington and on Amtrak trains.
- Advertising streamers on the company's proposed retiree health cuts were flown over college and pro football games throughout the region.

Under the agreement, base wages would rise by a total of 10.6 percent over three years, or 10.9 percent compounded. It calls for wage increases of 3.3 percent as of Dec. 31, 1995, another 3.6 percent a year later and 3.7 percent the final year. The settlement also provides a cash ratification payment of $1,500 and profit-sharing payments of at least $300 in 1997 and 1998.

Pension benefits would be boosted by 12 percent, and all retirees already on the pension rolls would receive a 4 percent benefit increase.

All retirees would be guaranteed full company payment of health care premiums through at least 2001.

In addition, the health plan was improved to provide fully paid wellness and preventive care and 100 percent network coverage of medical services after copayments have been made.

The union had remained firm in the area of employment security, and won several provisions. Bell Atlantic agreed to union representation for new "broadband" jobs — work associated with wiring homes for interactive cable TV services. Also, the company agreed to eliminate outside contracting of copper cable splicing throughout the service region.

Meanwhile, the pact provides for elimination of subcontractors performing similar work before outside technicians are laid off, as well as expedited union elections at the company's long-distance subsidiary, BALDI.

BARGAINING

Paperworkers locked out

Some 1,000 Paperworkers were locked out at Trailmobile's Charleston, Ill., plant after contract negotiations failed.

The Jan. 21 lockout came just four days before scheduled talks under the auspices of a federal mediator. The workers overwhelmingly rejected the company's last offer because it mandated an additional three-year wage freeze on top of the four-year freeze already in place. The previous contract expired Jan. 16.

"This is the type of action that has proven all too common with companies and investors from foreign countries taking over U.S. businesses and taking advantage of our workers and our membership," said Bill Coleman, a UPIU international representative. The UPIU was involved in a two-and-a-half-year lockout at A.E. Staley in Decatur, just 50 miles from Charleston.

Trailmobile, which manufactures truck trailers, is headquartered in Chicago and is owned by the investment group Gensala, which is headed by Indonesian businessman Edward Wanaodi.

SEIU gains St. Louis pacts

The Service Employees won a new three-year contract for 4,000 St. Louis-area janitors that raises wages by $1 an hour and increases employer contributions to the pension fund.

The agreement between SEIU Local 50 and the seven-member St. Louis Contract Cleaners Association calls for a 30-cents-per-hour raise effective Jan. 1, 1996, with successive 35-cent raises in each of the remaining two years. The wage increase applies to employees continuously on the payroll since July 1, 1995. Under the previous contract, senior employees with five or more years were paid at least $5 an hour.

The starting pay rate will increase from $4.25 an hour to $5 over the term of the contract. Contractors also will increase contributions to the pension fund by 1 cent a year from 5 cents per production hour to a total of 8 cents by Jan. 1, 1998. Contributions to the health and welfare fund will remain at 12 cents per production hour.

UAW ratifies Dana pact

UAW members approved a new three-year agreement with Dana Corp. that includes two bonuses and a 2 percent wage increase.

The 2,200 workers in four states received a 3 percent lump-sum bonus in January, with another 2.5 percent due next year along with the wage increase in December 1997. Cost-of-living protection is continued in the contract.

The pact also improves pension benefits, creates a personal 401(k) savings plan and improves dental benefits.

Tropicana pact squeezes by

The Teamsters narrowly ratified a new three-year contract with Tropicana Dole Beverages that raises wages by 10 percent but consolidates job classifications.

IBT Local 173 President Gary Baker said the 477-473 vote was so close because many workers did not like the consolidation program that trimmed from 210 to 15 the number of classifications at the Bradenton and Fort Pierce, Fla., plants. The pact covers some 2,200 workers.

The workers received a retroactive 4 percent raise in the first year, and will receive 3 percent increases in each of the following two years.

NABET-CWA charges NBC

The Broadcast Employees and Technicians filed unfair labor practices charges against NBC, charging the network unilaterally and illegally implemented a contract that is not completely ratified.

NABET-CWA members in seven of 11 bargaining units ratified the contract Dec. 7, while the other four units rejected it. The contract covers 2,200 employees. NABET-CWA told the network that the contracts were binding, but would not go into effect until all the contracts in the master agreement were ratified.

But NBC announced Jan. 22 it was implementing the contract in the seven units that already have ratified the deal. The network appears to be "more interested in discrediting the union and polarizing its membership at NBC than it is in reaching acceptable contracts," said John Krieger, NABET-CWA network coordinator.



Jocelyn Sherman/UFW

Farm Workers Vice President Dolores Huerta testified before the California Senate Health and Human Services Committee Jan. 24 against legislation to extend the use of methyl bromide. She is displaying a photograph of farm workers working in proximity to the deadly pesticide, which was supposed to be banned in 1991, but the deadline was extended five years to allow further health studies.

OCAW rejects 'insulting' oil pacts

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers rejected three contract offers from the oil industry, extended the contract for 24 hours and prepared for selective strikes, if warranted.

"The response to date by the oil companies on our collective bargaining program is nothing short of insulting to our people working in the oil industry," OCAW President Robert E. Wages said. "Despite our members' high productivity and their willingness to work with the companies, it is abundantly clear that this feeling is not mutual."

The last offer, rejected Jan. 29, was presented by Amoco and included a three-year agreement: a lump-sum bonus of $750 to be paid to each employee in lieu of a first-year wage increase and increases of 1.5 percent in each of the remaining two years.

That was slightly better than the second offer, which would have been a two-year agreement with a $500 bonus in the first year and a 1.5 percent wage increase in the second.

Neither proposal made any change in the companies' contribution to the cost of hospital-medical plan premiums, which would mean an increase in out-of-pocket costs for the workers should the premiums increase, union spokesman Rod Rogers said.

The proposals completely ignored the union's key concern of job security language preserving the complement of employees in the union for the term of the contract, and protecting its members in the event of sales and transfers of refineries, Wages said.

The union's other proposals, which the companies did not address, include wage increases of $1.25 per hour in each year. The 1.5 percent increase the companies have proposed amounts to about only 30 cents per hour, Rogers said.

The workers are seeking a better pension plan and an increase in the shift differential to $1.50 per hour for midnight shift work and $1 per hour for the evening shift.

Also on the union's list of proposals are an additional holiday — Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday — and a guarantee that benefits would be continued when an employee is on leave.

OCAW has proposed an "OCAW/Oil Industry Pact of Mutual Respect," calling for company neutrality in organizing campaigns in exchange for OCAW's agreement to "not engage in any derisive attacks on the company."

The union further would pledge to conduct any organizing campaign "fairly, with integrity and full recognition of an employee's legal right to participate or refrain from participation consistent with their legal rights."

The contracts, which cover some 40,000 OCAW members working for about 300 companies in oil refining, petrochemical processing, pipelines, production and marketing operations, expired Jan. 31.

— James B. Parks

ALPA says no to Delta givebacks

The Air Line Pilots have rejected a proposal by Delta Air Lines that would impose a 7 percent pay cut, longer working hours and other givebacks.

Contract negotiations resumed last week at the National Mediation Board in Washington, an unusual step to be taken prior to an impasse being declared, according to ALPA spokesperson Karen McGuffey. "It's something we're viewing as positive," she said.

The pilots are seeking a 5 percent increase, which would not go into effect unless annual corporate profits exceed $600 million, as well as job security provisions, an equity stake in the carrier and a seat on the board.

Although ALPA negotiators earlier agreed to lower pay scales for a new no-frills network still on the drawing boards, Delta now appears ready to use the operation as leverage, threatening to pursue such "alternative means" as contracting out if an agreement isn't reached soon.

Management also is trying to levy a fee on retirees to retain their medical coverage, reduce retirement pay by 7 percent, cut night pay and vacation time and dictate work-rule changes that would result in the loss of jobs, ALPA said.

"We feel these concessions are excessive in light of what we have already done to help Delta become more effective," said McGuffey, who noted that the tentative agreement on the no-frills operation would mean a reduction of wages and benefits of about 40 percent.

"If we're going to give items of value to the company, we expect valuable items in return," she said.

The union was planning to send out a strike ballot to its members, the first time ever at the nation's third-largest carrier.

In other airline developments:

- ALPA has suspended self-help activities at Federal Express Corp. in the hopes of facilitating a first contract for 2,800 pilots there.
- USAir has tapped Stephen M. Wolf, who presided over United Airlines during its transition to an employee-owned carrier, to be CEO at a time when the airline is seeking large concessions from its work force.
- Informational picketing was set up Jan. 26 by the Flight Attendants at Phoenix's Sky Harbor Airport to protest what AFA MEC President Deborah Volpe called America West Airline's "reneging on a promise to reward their employees for helping to make the airline profitable again" through its AWArd pay program.

— David Kameras

AFSCME, USWA get mixed results in Kaiser talks

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Negotiations continue after mixed results on contract ratification votes by AFSCME and Steelworkers members employed by Kaiser Permanente in California.

All but one unit of the United Nurses Association of California/AFSCME members accepted Kaiser's offer, while USWA members overwhelmingly rejected a "last, best and final" offer from Kaiser on a 1,538-to-352 vote Jan. 8. And after the company unilaterally implemented part of the offer, the workers authorized a strike.

In voting tallied Jan. 17, some 4,000 AFSCME-represented registered nurses, RN practitioners and physician's assistants approved the five-year agreement for Kaiser facilities in Bakersfield, Bellflower, Fontana, Harbor City, Panorama City, Riverside, San Diego, Sunset and West Los Angeles.

A unit of nearly 400 workers at Woodland Hills rejected the pact, however, citing concerns over changes in the staffing mix of licensed and unlicensed personnel.

The contract provides that there will be no mandatory layoff of nurses in the event of a change in the staffing mix. However, nurses could be sent to another Kaiser facility or placed in an on-call pool. In addition, the UNAC and Kaiser agreed they would apply for state funds to retrain nurses if necessary.

That assurance helped win support for the pact, UNAC officials said.

"Kaiser says quality is its No. 1 priority as well, and we're willing to work with them to keep quality at its highest level," said UNAC President Kathy J. Sackman. "But we will not be a party to actions which lower care quality, we won't go along with any cost-cutting at the expense of the patients and we will loudly and publicly oppose any savings that subject our patients to care which is anything less than the best."

UNAC will have input into decisions on proposed changes to the staffing mix, with disputes over proposed changes submitted to a three-party panel. However, the company's CEO could overturn the panel's decision should either party dispute it.

At Woodland Hills, the current mix comprises the highest percentage of RNs in any of the facilities, so staff might bear a greater cost if Kaiser seeks to replace RNs with unlicensed personnel, according to AFSCME spokesman David Miller.

Woodland Hills workers also were concerned over the creation of an income-protection/gain-sharing program slated to take effect in the first quarter of 1997, in which they felt participation would run counter to the role that nurses play in the delivery of health care.

The contract also includes a one-year wage freeze. In subsequent years, a neutral health care economist will compare the compensation levels of the Kaiser employees to those earned by nurses at an "as yet undefined community of comparable medical facilities."

An earned time-off program will be created that places sick leave, vacation and other time off in one pool, with the effect of reducing the number of sick leave days from 15 to 12. And, for the first time, the workers will have a $5 co-payment for doctor's visits and for prescription drugs.

Kaiser's initial demands were rejected by a 4-1 margin, with the main sticking point Kaiser's plan to replace massive numbers of licensed, professional nurses with unlicensed, undertrained personnel and without input from the union. Members authorized a strike, but negotiations continued under the auspices of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and, last December, the two sides reached a tentative agreement.

Meanwhile, the company's proposal to members of USWA Local 7600 also included a wage freeze in the first year and a new wage structure in the second year that would be lower than the current scale. The union is trying to resume contract talks with the company.

The prior contract covering the 2,600 USWA-represented technical, clerical, patient care, equipment services and service and maintenance employees expired Nov. 1, and was extended twice while negotiations continued. The contract covering other workers expired Dec. 18.



SEIU photo

Service Employees President Richard W. Cordtz (at rear, with umbrella) was among 42 demonstrators arrested Jan. 31 in San Francisco's financial district while protesting the quality of patient care at California's Vencor-Hillhaven nursing homes. The workers have held several street demonstrations to alert patients' families to the poor care there, which includes inadequate staffing levels, training, equipment and supplies. The union also is running radio ads in cities throughout the country where Vencor-Hillhaven operates facilities, calling the company a "heartless profit machine." Some 2,000 SEIU members are working without a contract because the company has refused in bargaining to address the issues of quality care and working conditions.

Health care professionals needed

Hospital, nursing home staffing found wanting

By Colleen M. O'Neill

A recent study confirms a problem that health care workers know all too well — hospitals and nursing homes are critically understaffed by professionals.

The industry is undergoing a radical restructuring, with the trend away from licensed, professional health care workers to unlicensed staffing — and with unions fighting to see workers and patients better protected.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) study, "Nursing Staff in Hospitals and Nursing Homes: Is it Adequate?," was mandated by Congress in response to a Service Employees' study, and gives evidence that reduction in professional nursing services plays a role in jeopardizing the quality of care patients receive. While it stops short of calling for mandated nurse-patient staffing ratio, most nurse advocates see the study's results as a step in the right direction.

"This study shows that we can't rely on market forces alone to ensure that patients and workers are treated adequately and fairly," said SEIU President Richard W. Cordtz. "It reaffirms the need not only to maintain existing hospital and nursing home standards, but to improve them," he added, noting that such standards currently are under attack in Congress.

There is an economic component to the report's results as well, said United Nurses Association of California President Kathy J. Sackman, an AFSCME vice president.

"Currently, over 60 percent of Americans with health care insurance receive coverage through a managed care system," she said. "The growing dominance of managed care systems has a direct impact on nurses and nursing assistants, and on the quality of health care that patients receive.

"Hospitals, eager to win inclusion in managed care networks, have begun to implement cost-saving measures that reassign nursing duties to unlicensed personnel," Sackman said. "In some jurisdictions, a significant portion of nursing duties are performed by unlicensed personnel, even though the ultimate responsibility — and legal liability — fall to the licensed nurse on duty."

Specifically, the report found a strong link between quality patient care, levels of nursing staff and the federal standards in nursing homes. It clearly refutes the Republican-led attack on Medicaid, which calls for repealing those standards for quality of life, quality of care and patient rights.

The current staffing mix of licensed to unlicensed personnel in hospitals and nursing homes should be adjusted, the report said, recommending that hospitals expand the use of registered nurses who have advanced training and that Congress mandate around-the-clock coverage by registered nurses in nursing homes by the year 2000.

The report noted that there are enough RNs nationwide to meet the need for quality care, though education and training may not be adequate to meet current or future demands of a rapidly changing health care system.

It calls for creating and disclosing standards to uniformly measure patient care in hospitals; monitoring effects of hospital reorganizations on patients and staff; improved training of support staff; legislation to require nursing homes to increase the number of professional nurses on all shifts; and financial incentives from Medicare and Medicaid to improve staffing.

It also calls on hospitals and nursing homes to address workplace safety issues relating to inadequate staffing levels, such as job-related stress and back injuries.

"We strongly support recommendations in the report for more registered nurses in nursing homes, more nursing involvement in hospital restructuring and careful screening of nursing assistants," said Candice Owley, chair of AFT's Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals.

"Most nurses today are working under extremely difficult and stressful conditions," she said. "There is, as the committee notes, a lack of hard data on how these conditions affect patient care. There is also a lack of data on how new staff configurations affect quality of care.

"We believe that organizations which are proceeding wholesale with these kinds of changes — in the absence of any information about how they will affect quality — are behaving recklessly, and we would urge extreme caution," Owley said.

According to the report, RNs in hospitals are moving from providing direct patient care to coordinating and supervising patient care. At the same time, nurse assistants are assuming greater responsibility for patient care in some institutions under the direction of RNs.

The IOM recommended that RNs with advanced practice preparation — clinical nurse specialists, nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives and certified RN anesthetists — be given an expanded role to allow them to provide clinical leadership and cost-effective patient care.

"This study officially acknowledges the strong link between qualified nursing staff and the safety of patients," said Rhonda Goode, a registered nurse in Los Angeles and chair of SEIU's Nurse Council.

"It makes it clear that nursing personnel must be involved from the outset in any hospital job redesign, and that our professional knowledge and experience is needed to develop any such changes."

Jobs melting before snow in harsh winter

By David Kameras

Unemployment was up sharply in January, increasing concern that the economy is slowing down.

Severe winter weather in the East helped to siphon off 200,000 jobs, pushing the unemployment rate up to 5.8 percent.

While unemployment in December remained unchanged at 5.6 percent, reflecting a pattern of little change for the past year, things are getting worse in many parts of the country.

New Jersey, for example, saw its unemployment rate jump that month from 6.1 percent to 7.3 percent, the second-highest in the country, and that was before record snowfalls and the announcement of massive layoffs by the state's largest private employer, AT&T, were taken into account.

"There's just no damn work out there," said state AFL-CIO President Charles H. Marciante.

At the same time, workers put in a shorter week in January, down a big 0.6 hour, 1.4 hours in manufacturing, with snow again probably playing a role. The decrease in hours worked limited the increase in average weekly earnings, even as average hourly earnings rose 0.5 percent to $11.68.

"The data shows a definite serious decline, but it is difficult to totally evaluate the impact of the snow," said AFL-CIO chief economist Rudy Oswald. "Clearly, the numbers are not anything to cheer about."

Oswald noted that employment rose by a scant 150,000 in December, with nearly half the gain in services, particularly health care. "The overall growth rate was reflective of slower growth in 1995 than in the prior two years," he said. Without the return of laid-off auto workers and striking workers at Caterpillar and Boeing, the anemic growth in jobs would have been even thinner.

Offsetting any employment gains is the continuing wave of layoffs that respects neither industry nor region. Among the latest casualties are workers at:

- AT&T, which on the heels of its plan to cut 40,000 jobs, is closing all 338 of its Phone Center retail stores at the cost of 2,500 jobs, most of them union.
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp., which has abolished 1,000 jobs and plans to cut 1,600 more in the future.
- Kraft Foods Inc., which is attempting to pare 1,400 administrative positions.
- Lockheed Martin Manned Space Systems, which will terminate 200 New Orleans jobs this year.
- More than 360 Mine Workers lost their jobs when the unionized Martinka Coal Co., unable to comply with the pollution requirements of the Clean Air Act, shut down in Fairmont, W.Va. However, some 150 of them will receive help in finding new jobs, thanks to a $2.9 million federal grant.

"American workers need to know that, when dislocations like this occur, (the Clinton) administration is committed to providing the best available training, retraining and support services," Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich said. "It is our goal to help these workers become as productive as possible so they can compete effectively in the labor marketplace."

While officially there are 7.7 million unemployed workers, another 1.7 million have given up looking for work, and 4.2 million who want full-time jobs are working part time. That makes a total of 13.6 million suffering partial or total unemployment.

The jobless rate grew for adult women (4.6 percent to 5.1 percent), adult white women (4.3 percent to 4.5 percent), African-Americans (10.2 percent to 10.5 percent), adult African-American women (7.2 percent to 8.8 percent) and Hispanics (9.3 percent to 9.4 percent). It remained steady for adult men (4.9 percent), whites (5 percent), adult white men (4.3 percent) and African-American teenagers (30.4 percent) and went down for teenagers (18.3 percent to 18 percent), white teenagers (15.4 percent to 15.1 percent) and adult African-American men (9.9 percent to 9.3 percent).

In December, the last month for which timely data will be available due to federal budget cuts, large industrial states besides New Jersey saw unemployment rise in Illinois (5 percent to 5.7 percent), Massachusetts (5.1 percent to 5.2 percent), Michigan (5 percent to 5.3 percent), New York (6 percent to 6.4 percent), North Carolina (4.2 percent to 5.1 percent) and Texas (6 percent to 6.4 percent). It remained steady at 6.3 percent in Pennsylvania and went down in California (8.8 percent to 7.7 percent), Florida (6.3 percent to 6.2 percent) and Ohio (5.8 percent to 5.1 percent).

Emerging HDTV could mean jobs

More than 100,000 jobs could be created if the Federal Communications Commission adopts a standard for the next generation of television that favors the developments of two leading European consumer products companies.

With favorable transmission standards, North American Philips Corp. and Thomson Consumer Electronics have pledged to the Electrical Workers and the Electronic Workers to create American jobs by building plants in the United States for the coming wave of Advanced Television (ATV) and High Definition Television (HDTV).

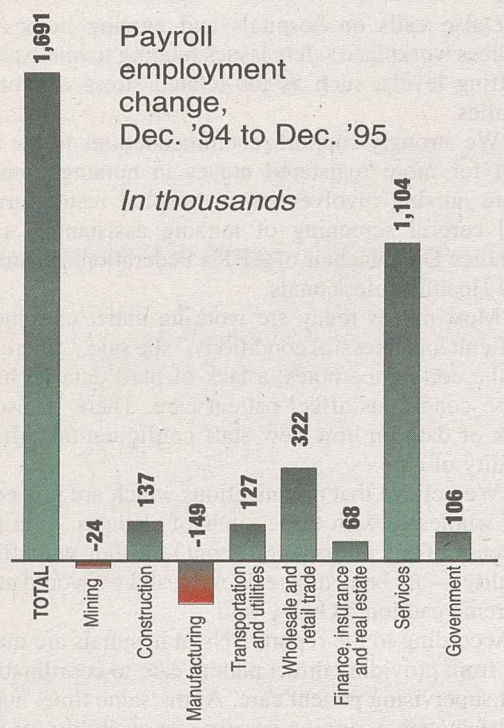
"U.S. workers have a vital interest in the developing advanced television industry and in the potential jobs it will create," declared IUE President William Bywater.

He noted that a delay in setting the standard would invite foreign competitors to erode America's technological lead.

"We urge the FCC to do whatever it can to see that these jobs are located in the United States," he said.

DATA

Winners and losers



More than two-thirds of new jobs created over the past year were in the low-paying service sector. Good-paying manufacturing jobs, meanwhile, continued on the decline.

Unemployment Rate	
December	5.6 percent
November	5.6 percent
Consumer Prices (CPI-W)	
December	+0.3 percent
November	Unchanged
Producer Prices (Finished Goods)	
December	+0.5 percent
November	+0.5 percent

AFL-CIO NEWSGRAFIC

Unions seen as key to ESOP success

By James B. Parks

The key ingredient in a successful employee stock ownership plan is real power for workers gained through collective bargaining, union leaders said.

"The union role is really critical in an ESOP," former Steelworkers President Lynn Williams told the annual meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association. Because employee-management relations are "in some ways more difficult and trickier than they are in more traditional circumstances . . . collective bargaining remains critically important" in making and amending the deal and helping the new employee owners function, Williams said.

The union also needs to protect workers from managers who may be more business savvy than the new stockholders, Williams added. "The union has an important role in terms of training our members, educating our members, helping them function in this new arena."

About 6 million workers are covered by an ESOP, or close to 6 percent of the private-sector work force, Prof. Douglas L. Kruse of Rutgers University told the meeting.

Seth Rosen of the Air Line Pilots, which has negotiated ESOPs at Northwest, United and Trans World Airlines, pointed to the importance of creating long-term stability and financial commitment, "some kind of real control or significant influence over corporate decision-making."

During a 1985 strike at United, Rosen said, ALPA increased dues by 1 percent. "That gave us the staying power to deal with some of the employers that we had to deal with and also the partial resources" to pay for investment bankers and job-security experts, he said.

Currently at United, where 55 percent of the company is owned by employees represented by ALPA and the Machinists, "they're making great strides," Rosen said. The top issue now "is to deal better with other employees," particularly the Flight Attendants, who are not part of the buyout, he added.

The union must make democratic procedures a top priority where workers have representation on the board, Williams said.

> *"Everything is built on developing trust, and developing some kind of dispute resolution other than the classic confrontation."*
>
> **— Seth Rosen, Air Line Pilots**

"These are all leveraged buyouts, in effect," he said, "so you have to make room on the board for some public representatives and representatives of people who are lending you the money."

One of the hardest things to do in an ESOP is to find managers who "have the skill necessary and the talent necessary to manage a plant. At the same time, they have to have the sensitivity of working with employee owners," Williams said.

In the end, "everything is built on developing trust, and developing some kind of dispute resolution other than the classic confrontation," Rosen said.

The USWA is "very satisfied with the results" in 17 plants where employees are majority owners, Williams said, and it is seeking to add clauses in all its agreements that would give the union the right of first refusal to bid on behalf of employees before a plant is sold. But he cautioned that ESOPs are not a panacea and they do not work at every facility. It is important to conduct a feasibility study first, Williams said. Workers, sometimes in a time of crisis, latch "onto the idea that the union has a strategy to save the plant. Every plant that went out of business, people wanted to have it turned into an ESOP. And many of those places were absolute disasters."

ESOPs also are not substitutes for defined-benefit pension plans, Williams added.

NEWSMAKERS

Donald E. Wightman was elected to fill the unexpired term of Utility Workers President **Marshall Hicks**, who retired because of illness. Wightman has served as the union's national vice president and, previously, as president of Local 369, which represents the physical workers at the Boston Edison Company.

Police Associations Secretary-Treasurer **Sam Cabral** was elected president of the union, replacing **Robert B. Kliesmet**, who was appointed to fill the unexpired term of the sheriff of Milwaukee County, Wis., a management position. IUPA Vice President **Art Reddy** of Los Angeles was elected secretary-treasurer.

J. Davitt McAteer has been named acting solicitor of the Labor Department. McAteer has served as assistant secretary of labor for the Mine Safety and Health Administration since 1994, and previously worked as the executive director of the Occupational Safety and Health Law Center and with the Mine Workers as safety director. **Ida Castro**, the deputy assistant for workers' compensation, was named acting deputy solicitor.

David St. John, who served as an assistant to former AFL-CIO President **Lane Kirkland**, has been named chief writer at the Labor Department's Office of Assistant Secretary for Policy. He will be responsible for writing statements, white papers and speeches.

The White House announced that **Sarah M. Fox** will serve as a recess appointee to the National Labor Relations Board. Fox, who previously served as chief counsel to the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, will be seated on the five-member board through the fall of 1997. From 1982-1990, Fox served as counsel to the Bricklayers.

Amir Peretz has been elected chairman of Histadrut, Israel's federation of labor, it was announced by UNITE President **Jay Mazur**, who heads the National Committee for Labor Israel. Histadrut's former chairman, **Haim Ramon**, was appointed minister of the interior following the assassination of Prime Minister **Yitzhak Rabin** and the formation of a new government.

John K. Greele was named senior vice president and chief financial officer for ULLICO Inc. He will be responsible for providing guidance on major financial issues and assessing the financial impact of major business decisions. Greele has held a number of senior-level positions within the insurance industry, his latest as managing director of DCG Corporation/DeHayes Consulting Group in Calif.

Gene Carroll has been appointed director of the Union Leadership Program at Cornell University's New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations. Carroll previously was executive director of New York Jobs with Justice.

DEATH

Rita Lynn, actress, union and civil rights activist and pioneer in the use of theatrical performances as therapy for psychiatric patients, died after a long battle with cancer. She was 74.

Lynn, a member of the Television and Radio Artists and past Screen Actors Guild member, was featured in hundreds of television and radio programs, several films and dozens of stage productions.

She was seen in recurring roles on such shows as Playhouse 90, Kraft Theater, Bonanza and General Hospital.

Lynn was active in the 1965 civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., raising funds to pay for travel expenses for less affluent members of the film community to attend the march.

She is survived by her husband, a son, a daughter, a stepdaughter and five grandchildren.

CLARIFICATION

The world may call him "The Boss," but the Musicians know Bruce Springsteen as a card-carrying member of the AFM. Springsteen, who spoke out in support of the strikers at the Detroit News and Free Press and donated proceeds from souvenir sales to the strikers' fund, joined AFM Local 399 in Asbury Park, N.J., in 1972, and also today holds membership in Local 47 in Los Angeles.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper

RESOURCES

The **Union MasterCard Scholarship Program** is offering $150,000 in scholarships to union members, spouses and their children. To qualify, applicants must have at least one year of continuing good-standing membership in unions participating in the Union MasterCard program, as well as be accepted into, or be attending, an accredited university, college or community college, or a recognized trade or technical school. The application deadline is Feb. 28. Send requests on a post card noting union affiliation, name and return address to Union MasterCard Scholarship, P.O. Box 9389, Minneapolis, Minn. 55440-9389.

The **International Labor Communications Association** has announced rules and deadlines for its 1996 print journalism and film awards. For union publications, all work published between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1995, will be considered, and the entry deadline is April 5. This year's Saul Miller Award will be for outstanding efforts by the labor press to present stories about union organizing campaigns and victories. For contest rules and entry form, write ILCA, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; or call 202/637-5068.

CONVENTIONS

The **New Jersey AFL-CIO** has changed its convention date from April 22-24 to May 6-9. The Atlantic City location remains the same.

The **New York State AFL-CIO** convention will be held Sept. 9-11 at the Concord Resort Hotel in Kiamesha Lake.

CONFERENCES

The **34th AFL-CIO National Conference on Community Services** will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn, Mich., July 27-Aug. 2. Contact the AFL-CIO Community Services Department, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; or call 202/637-5192.

A statewide **meeting of Central Labor Councils** in New York will be held March 22 at the Sheraton Syracuse in Syracuse, N.Y. The next two days, at the same site, the **New York State Industrial Division and Union Label Conference** will be held.

The **AFL-CIO Education Conference and Annual Meeting of the University and College Labor Education Associations** will be held March 5-10 at the Sheraton University City in Philadelphia.

The AFL-CIO and Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations is sponsoring a **Conference on Union Organizing** March 31-April 2 at the Maritime Institute Seminar and Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, Md. The registration fee is $325. Contact Sheldon Friedman at 202/637-5310 or E-mail at 71112.675@compuserve.com; or call Vincent O'Brien at 202/637-5287.

PUBLICATIONS

Offensive Bargaining is a 133-page book that offers a new take on the fundamentals of bargaining law to prevent impasse. Copies are $15 each (plus 5 percent tax for Maryland residents). Contact Labor's Heritage Press Department, George Meany Center for Labor Studies, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 20903; or call 301/431-6400.

Mediating a Strike is a six-page teachers guide for use with the article, "The Pageant of the Paterson Strike: A Share of Life," in the fall 1994 issue of Labor's Heritage. Designed for teaching high school students, it includes instructions for teachers, a bibliography, historical background and profiles of eight people caught up in the strike. Contact Labor's Heritage at 301/431-5457.

ILCA Editors' Guide contains more than 250 pages of information on writing and editing tips, layout and graphic design, how labor works, stopping phony labor papers and working with the media. The guide is $25 plus $2.50 shipping and handling. Contact ILCA, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; or call 202/637-5068.

Your New Social Security and Medicare Fact Sheet, 1996 provides information on the most common issues and concerns, and includes a fold-out fact sheet to help workers find out how much they pay into the system and how much they will receive at retirement. The fact sheet costs 35 cents to 95 cents, depending on the number of copies ordered. Contact BNA Books, P.O. Box 7814, Edison, N.J. 08818-7814; or call 800/960-1220.

— Compiled by Sharolyn A. Rosier

UNION NEWS

Ex-MEBA officers guilty

Four former officers of the Marine Engineers have been ordered to forfeit $4.6 million in salary and severance payments they received between 1984-1990, in the first prosecution of national union officers for election fraud.

The four officers include C. Eugene DeFries, former president, who was sentenced to more than five years in prison by a federal court and ordered to forfeit nearly $2.5 million. The former union officials were convicted of running the union as a criminal enterprise.

The other three, Clyde Dodson, Reinhold "Fred" Schamann and Claude W. Daulley, have been ordered to forfeit $2.1 million in salaries and severance payments. Daulley also was sentenced to 21 months in jail.

In addition, DeFries' successor as union president, Alexander "Doc" Cullison, was convicted of racketeering and mail fraud, of extorting members of ballots and of forcing members to contribute to the union's political action fund.

FLRA overhauls rules

The final version of revamped regulations for deciding representation issues, including certification of representatives and units for collective bargaining, has been issued by the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The regulations are intended to help the FLRA quickly and effectively resolve representation questions that arise "when agencies are downsized and reorganized, with as little disruption as possible to labor-management relationships," said FLRA Chairman Phyllis Segal.

The most visible element of the revised rules is what the FLRA calls a generic representation petition "that's easier to file and avoids unnecessary delay due to checking the wrong box."

Mine Workers reorganize

The Mine Workers' executive board voted to streamline field operations with a reorganization that reduces districts from 16 to 10.

UMWA President Cecil Roberts said the new district structure will allow the union to devote more resources to membership services, including organizing.

A special commission of the board was formed last year to review the UMWA's structure and operations. The restructuring plan was the product of recommendations of that commission, district presidents and rank-and-file members.

AFL-CIO FAXes bulletin

In an effort to communicate more quickly and effectively with union leaders, supporters and activists across the country, the AFL-CIO is distributing a weekly FAX bulletin, which also goes to the media and a variety of outside audiences.

Called "Work in Progress," the bulletin will arrive the first of every week. The first two editions were distributed Jan. 23 and 29. They also are available on the AFL-CIO LaborNET on CompuServe and on the World Wide Web at http:\www.aflcio.org.

For further information, or to be added to the weekly FAX list, contact the AFL-CIO Information Department, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; Phone 202/637-5010 or FAX 202/508-6908.

Labor library on-line

The Martin P. Catherwood Library of Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations has established an electronic archive in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor to disseminate national reports on the Internet.

This development at Cornell puts libraries in the position of becoming public service publishing houses and underscores their importance in formulating national information policy, the university said.

UNITE takes union's case for workers to public

By Muriel H. Cooper

Using an "in-your-face" approach to the problems facing working Americans, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees has launched its first national advertising campaign, "showing the world as it really is."

UNITE is using broadcast and print advertising to energize current union members and reach other working people.

Using the slogan "The Face of Change," the campaign wants to increase familiarity with the union and to position it as a force for social and political action.

"The ads are a signal that this union is committed to serving as a strong catalyst for change," said UNITE President Jay Mazur.

The television spots mark a departure from traditional union advertising, depicting the grimy, too-real world — run-down homes, boarded-up factories and a trash-strewn lot.

"The point is to show the grittiness, the instability of our society — not glorify it," said Mazur. "In order for this to be an effective call to action, we need to put reality in the viewer's face."

The two 30-second spots will run on various programs aired on the Cable News Network as well as in selected media markets.

The ads feature union members and their families and reflect the diverse work force that UNITE represents. A song, "The Face of Change," was written for the TV ads urging viewers to join together to achieve common goals.

The print ads will appear in the national editions of The New York Times and The Washington Post, in select editions of The Wall Street Journal, and in Women's Wear Daily and the Daily News Record. In addition, UNITE will sponsor Morning Edition and All Things Considered, aired on National Public Radio.

Teamsters using radio

The Teamsters also are mounting a nationwide radio advertising campaign to warn Americans that unsafe Mexican trucks may soon be rolling down the highways in California, Texas, Arizona and New Mexico.

The North American Free Trade Agreement would allow these trucks, many of which are three times as old and twice as heavy as American trucks, to cross the borders.

"Truck drivers in Mexico don't have to be trained to transport hazardous materials — and they're paid as little as $7 a day," said IBT President Ron Carey in the ad.

"States are now inspecting one or two out of every 100 vehicles that cross the border. When NAFTA eventually multiplies by five times or more the number of trucks that cross now, the chances of being inspected will go down even further — even if a few more inspectors are added," he said.

The ads are running on 128 radio stations across the nation.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

New Organizing Director Richard Bensinger outlines plans for a Union Summer organizing campaign, which will be coordinated by Andy Levin, a former Service Employees organizer who is sitting behind Bensinger. At left is AFL-CIO Vice President Sonny Hall, president of the Transport Workers.

Organizing leads agenda for change

Continued from Page 1

work group, which consisted of key staff members from affiliated unions. Their task was to determine how best to implement proposals developed by Sweeney's New Voice campaign last year, integrating them with current federation resources and activities.

The organizing work group proceeded under the axiom that "the central mission of the AFL-CIO is to lead the labor movement in organizing," said Andy Stern, a vice president and the director of organizing at the Service Employees. "The AFL-CIO can't run organizing drives, but it can strengthen support and assistance to affiliates."

The task force used as a guide the work of the Committee on the Role of the AFL-CIO in Organizing, headed by Graphic Communications Union President James J. Norton, Stern said. That committee had recommended "that our first priority should be in industries where there is the greatest possibility of success to gain contracts," he noted.

A proportion of the organizing fund, implemented "at the maximum level possible, . . . should be allocated to the South and the Sun Belt to make sure we are organizing in areas where unions traditionally have been weak," Stern said.

The Union Summer campaign "is intended to make a dramatic statement about the initiative of young adults to shape their own future and to change the labor movement," Bensinger told the council. The AFL-CIO will recruit hundreds of trainees from college campuses and unionized workplaces for industrywide campaigns to be selected. Running for three weeks or perhaps longer, the campaigns will identify further organizing leads and create community-based support, he said.

The strategic campaigns work group, chaired by Joe Uehlein of the Industrial Union Department, recommended a new Center for Strategic Campaigns that would include a transnational corporate monitoring project. "Nearly 90 percent of all the campaigns we've worked on have had a multinational component," Uehlein said. "We need to enhance our ability to investigate multinational corporations."

The center would include a "contract campaign team, more than just striker support," he said. "We should support smarter solidarity, emphasizing early warning, planning and preparedness."

Also recommended was the creation of a Worker Ownership and Governance Institute to "advise worker-owners, lead shareholder initiatives and train pension fund trustees and investment managers," Uehlein said. In addition, global economic research should be enhanced outside the proposed center, and the International Affairs Department should be reorganized around the impact of the global economy on American workers, he said.

The communications work group, chaired by Denise Mitchell, Sweeney's assistant for public affairs, recommended more input from affiliates in better integrating communication in organizing, education, bargaining and political and legislative action, and an investment in paid media "to convey the importance of unions to working people."

"Unless we redefine our image, we won't be able to accomplish bargaining and political and legislative victories," Mitchell told the council. "The AFL-CIO should provide the leadership to develop a strategic plan involving all our affiliates."

Already under way is a reorganization of the federation's communications structure, including the integration of the Labor Institute of Public Affairs, with an emphasis on media outreach and public message development, she said. In addition, federation publications will be revamped "to motivate and support leaders and activists."

The work group on union education and training, headed by AFL-CIO Education Director Dorothy Shields, recommended the development of model curricula on a number of important labor issues, especially on workers' perspectives on the political economy, union organizing and labor history.

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UNION YES

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AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 4 FEBRUARY 19, 1996

Council looks to reverse membership slide

By Michael Byrne and Muriel H. Cooper

The AFL-CIO Executive Council gathers for its annual winter meeting Feb. 19 to draw up plans for the federation to lead massive new organizing activity. It is the labor movement's top priority, President John J. Sweeney has told every audience since his election in October.

"If working families are to have a better chance at a better life, we must rebuild the labor movement," Sweeney said. "We must organize at a pace and scale that is unprecedented."

The urgency of the organizing need was underscored Feb. 9 with the release of union membership figures for 1995, showing a decline for the year of 388,000. The drop came after a small gain in 1994, although membership as a percentage of the work force has steadily declined, from 15.5 percent to 14.9 percent in the latest figures. Union membership fell from 16.7 million in 1994 to 16.4 million in 1995, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

The government sector continued to be the most heavily unionized, at 37.8 percent of the work force. Transportation and public utility workers were 27 percent union, while manufacturing and construction followed with 18 percent each. Private nonagricultural industries were 10.4 percent unionized.

Union families continue to enjoy a considerable union advantage, earning 35 percent more than nonunion households, BLS reported. That advantage is even more pronounced for unionized women and minorities over their nonunion counterparts.

"Union members had median weekly earnings of $602, compared with a median of $447 for workers not represented by unions," noted Rudy Oswald, chief economist for the AFL-CIO. "There is a measurable advantage to belonging to a union."

But that demonstrated advantage has not by itself convinced more workers to join unions. For the labor movement to regain its strength, Sweeney said, workers must see that unions are fighting for them. He has called for aggressive organizing activity that would challenge employers who flout labor laws to intimidate workers.

"To every employer who wants to take the low road, the poverty wages, the replaceable workers, we'll be at your doorstep, in your face, on your conscience," said Richard Bensinger, who was appointed by Sweeney last month to head a new AFL-CIO Organizing Department.

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Photo by John Ravnik

More than 12,000 union members converged on the Capitol steps in Sacramento, Calif., to protest Gov. Pete Wilson's plans to slash prevailing rates for construction workers. Robert Balgenorth, president of the California Building and Construction Trades Council, warned that the result of Wilson's plan would "hardly be a living wage for a working family," with construction workers' salaries dropping from $28,000 a year to $22,000. Wilson's Industrial Welfare Commission is expected to issue new wage rates in July.

Unions counter business blitz for TEAM Act

Company union bill at dangerous juncture

By James B. Parks

The high-powered business lobby turned up the volume in its efforts to deliver a veto-proof vote for the misnamed TEAM Act, but unions issued a stern warning that the legislation would turn back the clock to a time when companies set up unions to foil workers' desire for real representation.

The so-called "Team Coalition," led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association for Manufacturers, has hired Tim Penny, a former Minnesota congressman, to lead the charge for company unions. At a Feb. 7 news conference, he tried to sell the bill as the only way to promote teamwork in American workplaces.

But in testimony before a Senate panel, AFL-CIO General Counsel Jonathan Hiatt pointed out that employers and workers are engaged in legal cooperative efforts in thousands of workplaces, and suggested that the proponents of the TEAM Act have an ulterior motive.

Hiatt cited a memo from the business coalition that describes the bill as allowing employers to create structures "to deal directly and exclusively with terms and conditions of employment," and leaves the "formation, composition and operation" of these structures in the hands of the employer.

The memo, Hiatt said, makes clear "that the 'involvement' proponents of this bill seek is 'involving' employees in management-created and management-controlled decision-making processes, which create the form — but not the substance — of joint decision-making."

Hiatt was joined before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee by UAW Legislative Director Alan Reuther, who said the TEAM Act would allow employers to dominate decision-making and increase corporate power at a time when it needs to be balanced by authentic worker voices.

The bill "would give carte blanche to unscrupulous employers to establish phony, company-dominated

Continued on Page 5

Hard work just doesn't pay today

By David Kameras

In a stunning demonstration of the falling buying power of American workers, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported last week that pay and benefits in the private sector rose only 2.8 percent in 1995, down from 3.1 percent in 1994 and the smallest increase since the agency began tracking the numbers in 1980.

Union members fared better, seeing a 3 percent increase in total compensation.

But the overall picture buttresses the arguments of trade unionists that despite five years of sustained economic recovery, American workers themselves have not recovered from the last recession, and are vulnerable to losing more ground in the next one.

The new figures "remind American workers that they're not sharing in the nation's productivity growth," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said. "They're barely keeping up with the cost of living."

The growing wage disparity between the rich and average working Americans will be a major issue before the AFL-CIO Executive Council during its winter meeting Feb. 19-22. Sweeney told the council in January that he plans to hold a series of town hall meetings this year to listen to workers' concerns and ideas about the growing wage gap.

The latest data was fed by December's 0.2 percent drop in real earnings, another barometer measuring the continuing economic problems faced by American working families.

The decline in real weekly earnings was driven by a 0.3 percent drop in hours worked and a 0.3 percent inflation rate. Workers have seen their annual real weekly earnings plummet 10.3 percent since December 1979.

The new data led AFL-CIO economist Anne Draper to estimate that it would take $15,682 annually, or $7.54 an hour, for a four-person family to reach the poverty line. Yet the federal minimum wage is still stubbornly pegged at $4.25, thanks to persistence by

Continued on Page 14

Anti-union campaign lands Overnite in docket

Overnite Transportation has been hauled into a federal court in Minneapolis over allegations that it has committed more than 100 unfair labor practices during an ongoing organizing campaign by the Teamsters.

The National Labor Relations Board is prosecuting the case, which the IBT describes as one of the most significant labor trials in history. The anti-union campaign run by Overnite, a subsidiary of Union Pacific, has included the personal involvement of the company's chief executive officer, the union said.

CEO James Douglas, charged with some of the labor law violations, is scheduled to testify at the trial, which got under way Feb. 12. The company faces charges of illegal firings, intimidation, coercion and discrimination.

"Union Pacific's Overnite is the No. 1 labor law violator in America today," said IBT President Ron Carey. "This trial will expose the company's massive drive to deny Overnite workers their rights to union representation."

During the past year, the IBT has organized 1,600 Overnite workers at 17 terminals, making it one of the largest private-sector organizing drives in a decade.

Most recently, workers at terminals in Bayshore, N.Y., and Bowling Green, Ky., voted for representation despite an aggressive anti-union campaign that has become all too familiar to IBT organizers. Workers in Bowling Green voted 15-10 for representation while those in Bayshore went 19-16 for the union.

The depth of Union Pacific's anti-union stance can be seen on Capitol Hill, where company lobbyists have been busy trying to persuade Congress to cut the NLRB's funding by 30 percent.

The NLRB voted last year to authorize the board's general counsel to seek a federal court order stopping Overnite officials from using threats and other unlawful tactics against workers who support the union.

The board also said that the company's behavior was so bad in 17 sites that fair representation elections were impossible to achieve. The NLRB said it would seek bargaining orders at those sites to require Overnite to negotiate a first IBT contract.

Overnite, the fourth-largest LTL (less-than-load) freight-hauling company in the country, has about 9,500 dockworkers, drivers and mechanics that may be eligible to join the union.

— Muriel H. Cooper

ORGANIZING

LIUNA for Indian health

Some 1,100 professional and nonprofessional employees at six Phoenix-area Indian Health Service facilities are joining the Laborers after 81 percent of voters picked LIUNA.

The Indian Health Service provides the Native American community with primary health care services. The six facilities involved in the election were the Phoenix Indian Medical Center, the Phoenix Area Office, White River IHS, San Carlos IHS, Fort Yuma IHS and Parker IHS.

"This victory is a strong message to the IHS management that the voices of these workers will be heard," said LIUNA President Arthur A. Coia. "They will stand up for the rights, dignity and respect they deserve."

New Ludlum vote set

The National Labor Relations Board has ordered a new representation election at Allegheny Ludlum Corp., saying the company unlawfully demeaned, threatened and coerced the workers against joining the Steelworkers.

The NLRB also ordered the company to reinstate with full back pay and wages an office worker fired for his union sympathies.

The contested election involved salaried employees in Western Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh.

"If Allegheny Ludlum had not violated the law, these workers would now have the protection of a labor union," said Andrew V. Palm, director of USWA District 10. "Based on the company's actions, it's clear they need one, and this decision brings them one step closer to ending their struggle and receiving the representation they deserve," he said.

BLE is on a roll

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has achieved 21 consecutive months of net membership growth.

Last month, 203 rail industry employees, including locomotive engineers, train conductors and dispatchers, joined the BLE. The latest gains are the result of a successful organizing effort and continued membership recruiting, the union said.

Unions plan organizing rejuvenation

Continued from Page 1

In an interview with The Wall Street Journal, Bensinger said the goal of the new department is to "rebuild the infrastructure for organizing and to create successful models," but first "we have to rekindle hope."

One of the department's first projects is developing Sweeney's plan for a Union Summer, an effort to enlist a thousand young unionists and college students to become involved in the essential work of union organizing.

That campaign "will offer a dramatic statement about the initiative of young adults to shape their own future" and to show that labor has a new and energized outlook, Bensinger said.

The council last year authorized the creation of a $20 million organizing fund to help affiliates with organizing efforts, and the financing and administration of that fund are topics the council will take up at its winter meeting. Recommendations will come from the Organizing Committee and its new chairman, Laborers President Arthur A. Coia.

Coia said he believes that the unions of the AFL-CIO "represent the best line of defense for working Americans" and vowed to use his position as chair of the Organizing Committee "to further not just our goals, but the goals of all working Americans."

Coia said unions need to reach out especially to women and minorities, a proposition borne out by the BLS 1995 union membership numbers. White women and Hispanics were among the least organized segments of the work force, at 11 percent and 13 percent, respectively, even though they are among the fastest-growing, and are most in need of unions to improve their economic disadvantages.

"To every employer who wants to take the low road, the poverty wages, the replaceable workers, we'll be at your doorstep, in your face, on your conscience."

— Richard Bensinger
AFL-CIO Organizing Director

The groundwork for intensified new organizing activity has been laid by an organizing transition work group appointed by Sweeney in November. Among the recommendations of the work group was to set aside a portion of the organizing fund for a vigorous campaign to organize in the low-wage South and Sun Belt, where employers have been particularly resistant to unions.

The South offers numerous opportunities for unique organizing strategies, including multiunion campaigns and increased use of the successful Organizing Institute. The institute, which Bensinger directed previously and which now is part of the Organizing Department, has trained hundreds of organizers now active in a number of affiliates.

NLRB: 'Directing' nurses not supervisors

Routine direction of patient care does not make a nurse a "supervisor" and thus a manager ineligible for union membership, the National Labor Relations Board decided this month.

In the first cases since a 1994 U.S. Supreme Court decision muddied the waters, the NLRB said that charge nurses at an Alaskan hospital and licensed practical nurses at a New York nursing home were employees, not supervisors.

There are about 70 similar cases pending before the board.

"It's a victory for common sense," said Albert Shanker, president of the AFT, which organizes nurses under its Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals. "Most nurses are not part of management and should be able to join unions and bargain collectively."

The NLRB cases hinged on deciding whether nurses in charge of hospitals, nursing homes and home health care delivery were to be considered acting in a supervisory capacity, with "responsibility to direct," and direction "done with independent judgment."

This decision says the majority of nurses in those situations are giving routine directions necessary to the functioning of the facility, and are not supervisors — paving the way for them to join unions.

Only those nurses who exercise independent judgment in directing others would be precluded from union membership.

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Trumka: NLRB cuts a devious hatchet job

Governors are no help with Medicaid proposal

By Mike Hall

The attack on the National Labor Relations Board cloaked in the budget debate is "a means of settling scores and terrorizing" the labor board for its decisions that have angered the business community, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka told a Senate panel.

The Labor/HHS appropriations bill (H.R. 2127), passed in the House, has been stalled in the Senate since last fall. The NLRB's funding — and that for other agencies and departments without appropriations bills — are currently provided for in a continuing resolution that expires March 15.

But the labor appropriations bill is expected to move in the Senate soon, following an appeals court ruling against President Clinton's executive order barring federal contracts with companies that permanently replace strikers (**See story, Page 4**). The Senate stall was over a rider sought by the Republicans to forbid the Labor Department from enforcing the order.

The Senate labor appropriations bill funds the NLRB at 1995 levels, while the House bill calls for a 30 percent cut, which would reduce the nation's deficit by less than 0.02 percent, Trumka told the Senate Appropriations labor subcommittee. A House-Senate conference will seek to resolve the differences.

The House bill also carries several legislative riders designed to hamstring the agency's power to enforce labor law.

"The attack on the NLRB has less to do with balancing the federal budget than with preserving the imbalance of power that exists in America — and American workplaces — today," he said.

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) agreed, noting that House Republicans targeted the board as part of their general attack on the rights of working people — from the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act to Medicare, Medicaid and college loans. Harkin charged the board's opponents with wanting to turn it into a "toothless tiger."



Marianne Keffer Zweig/Page One Photography

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka tells Senate panel that slashing the NLRB's budget will allow workplace injustices in the name of balancing the federal budget.

The NLRB has cut its staff by more than 1,000 workers since 1980, NLRB Chairman William B. Gould testified. He warned that further cuts would result in even more and longer backlogs, and the labor board's investigative ability would be crippled.

Several days later, he told a group of California labor lawyers that it looked like Congress was trying to "penalize the agency for enforcing the law."

The NLRB is already underfunded, Trumka said, noting that the median length of time to judge an unfair labor practice charge is 503 days. Yet the current delays are much shorter than those that occurred when the NLRB operated under the Bush administration, and the board is moving more quickly and strongly to enforce labor law, he said.

"There are some in the business community who apparently feel aggrieved by the fact that for the first time in years, the National Labor Relations Act is being enforced," he said. To defund the NLRB "would be to play a cruel hoax on working Americans and to further tilt the balance of power in favor of the already powerful."

Meanwhile, as the Clinton administration and Congress battle over a budget blueprint marked by GOP plans to slash Medicare, Medicaid and college loan programs, the nation's governors have offered up a Medicaid plan that would be "a significant step backwards for the 35 million Americans who depend on Medicaid for their health insurance coverage," AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee and SEIU President Richard Cordtz said in a letter to President Clinton urging his rejection of the proposal.

The National Governors Association plan would slash some $123 billion from Medicaid over seven years; restrict the number of people who would be guaranteed health coverage; cut off mothers who receive Aid to Dependent Children benefits unless they are pregnant; and allow states to set new definitions of disability and deny benefits to those who do not meet the new criteria. It also in effect would end the program's entitlement status.

"While the proposal outlines a benefits package of sorts, the categories are quite vague," McEntee and Cordtz wrote. "It does not appear as if there would be a floor as to amount, duration and scope of coverage for the various benefits, as there is in the current Medicaid program. An entitlement to coverage means very little if the benefits are so sparse as to provide little real protection."

They urged Clinton to stand by his current proposal, which preserves a federal guarantee of coverage, a federally defined benefits package and adequate federal and state financing.

OSHA defenders, opponents dig in for trench warfare

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Movement on legislation to gut job safety and health protections appears imminent — even though surveys show overwhelming support for strong workplace safety programs.

A May 1995 poll by Peter D. Hart Research Associates found that "improving workplace health and safety is a top priority for three-fourths of union members and two-thirds of the general public." In addition, the survey showed that "67 percent of union members say they have very major concerns about the Republicans in Congress because they are cutting back on enforcement of health and safety regulations to protect workers."

A second Hart poll conducted in November 1995 found that 65 percent of Americans surveyed want President Clinton to reject any budget that reduces enforcement of occupational safety and health protections, while a September 1995 study conducted by Fingerhut-Granados Opinion Research Co. found that "by a margin of 28 percent to 65 percent, workers do not think Congress should limit OSHA's ability to require employers to comply with safety standards."

Despite that overwhelmingly negative feedback, a markup is expected in the House Economic and Educational Opportunities subcommittee on work force protections on H.R. 1834 during March, while the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee is expected to take up S. 1423 then as well.

The House measure, introduced by panel chair Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.), would turn the Occupational Safety and Health Administration from an enforcer of laws to a consultant for businesses, and would remove many rights workers have under the Occupational Safety and Health Act to report problems and seek redress.

As originally introduced, H.R. 1834 also would scale back protections of the Mine Safety and Health Administration and merge it with OSHA. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the only federal agency conducting job safety research, would be abolished.

Since its introduction last June, Ballenger has held several hearings but has been reluctant to even schedule a markup because of labor's active opposition to H.R. 1834 and the lukewarm reception by many business interests.

On the Senate side, S. 1423 — put forth by Sens. Nancy L. Kassebaum (R-Kan.) and Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) — parallels Ballenger's measure in some respects and goes much further in others. For example, components of the TEAM Act, inviting the formation of company unions, are highlighted in the Kassebaum/Gregg measure. It also would exempt millions of workplaces from government inspections, significantly reduce penalties for violators and allow OSHA to issue warnings instead of citations for most hazards.

Labor's efforts against S. 1423 have slowed momentum of that measure as well: Not one senator has signed on to co-sponsor the legislation.

"We've had great success in showing members of Congress what a bad deal these measures would be for America's workers," said Peg Seminario, the AFL-CIO's director of occupational safety and health. "It's important to keep up our efforts at this crucial juncture, though, so we can put these measures to rest for good."

Funding for job safety and health remains uncertain also. The Department of Labor and its agencies are among those currently operating under a limited continuing resolution, which will expire March 16. Under those terms, OSHA funding is cut 15.5 percent from fiscal year 1995 levels, with MSHA funding down by 8 percent.

The combined effect of two government shutdowns and the slashed funding has been fewer inspections, slowed responses to worker complaints and a slowdown in work on standards. However, NIOSH was fully funded for the rest of the year under the CR, and actually garnered a $2 million budget increase.

The 25 states that run their own job safety plans — and count on 50 percent of the funding for those programs from federal OSHA — also have felt the effects of the funding cuts, as their budgets have taken a hit and forced re-evaluation of 1996 plans.

Union members have stepped up postcard and petition drives and continue to use the 1-800-97-AFL-CIO number to get the message to Congress that job safety and health is important to America's working families.

For example, the Wisconsin South Central AFL-CIO and WISCOSH held a "KLUG-A-THON" last month, in which constituents of H.R. 1834 co-sponsor Rep. Scott Klug (R-Wis.) were encouraged to call his office and challenge his support of the legislation.

In Michigan, the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO and SEMCOSH sponsored a rally outside the offices of Sen. Spencer Abraham (R-Mich.) to protest his support of measures to undermine job safety protections. In New York, representatives from the Mid-State AFL-CIO met with Rep. Jim Walsh (R-N.Y.) regarding his position on H.R. 1834.

Appeals court strikes striker replacement order

By James B. Parks

Unions were outraged by a federal appeals court decision overturning President Clinton's executive order barring federal contracts to employers who permanently replace striking workers. The ruling is "simply wrong," declared AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

"This ruling serves those employers who want to wage war on workers, and hurts the rest of us — working families, communities, fair employers, our nation," he said. "We will fight against this decision — and every attack on American working families."

President Clinton called his order "economically sound, fair and legal," and said he has instructed the Justice Department to "take all appropriate steps to have this decision overturned."

Until President Reagan fired the air traffic controllers in 1981, Sweeney said, "it was unheard of for employers to punish workers for exercising their right to strike. Everyone understood that doing so was wrong.

"Now, three judges appointed by Presidents Reagan and Bush have declared that firing strikers is right, and that even the President of the United States cannot refuse to do business with federal contractors who throw out their experienced, skilled employees and replace them with workers who are poorly prepared," Sweeney said.

In a ruling that tracked arguments raised by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and business allies such as Bridgestone/Firestone, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled Feb. 2 that the executive order conflicts with federal labor law, which the court said guarantees the employer the right to hire permanent replacements during an economic strike.

The executive order, issued last March, applies to federal contracts above $100,000 and gives the labor secretary authority to notify agencies any time a contractor uses permanent replacements during a strike. The agency can be instructed to terminate the contract and bar further contracts with the company.

Just two days before the court ruling, Bridgestone/Firestone, one of the prime movers behind the suit to overturn the order, was charged by the National Labor Relations Board with illegally replacing some 2,000 Steelworkers who were on strike against the giant tiremaker.

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich said the executive order was designed to ensure the quality of federal procurements. "We don't want American servicemen and women in Bosnia trying to keep the peace while driving around on tires made by rookies and replacement workers," he said.

Rep. William Clay (D-Mo.), ranking minority member of the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee, said he was not surprised that three Republican court appointees had blocked Clinton's "efforts to protect American taxpayers and workers." The court's decision is "in line with a string of cases that effectively gut the rights of American workers," Clay said.

Congressional Republicans tried and failed to overturn the order by attaching it to the Labor/HHS appropriations bill, which Clinton said he would veto.

Organizing rights face legislative, legal challenges

By James B. Parks

The right of workers to organize and take their message to the public came under attack in both the courts and the halls of Congress.

A federal appeals court upheld two National Labor Relations Board decisions that make it impossible for workers to gain access to employers' private property to solicit support from the employers' customers, except where the employer allows other groups to solicit on the property.

Meanwhile, a bill that would allow employers to discriminate against unions in selectively granting access to individuals for solicitations would "virtually repeal" federal labor law, Teamsters General Counsel Judith A. Scott told a House panel.

Generally, the law now allows employees to solicit in support of a union during non-work time on their employer's premises, and allows employees access to the property of other employers if the employers open their premises to other forms of solicitation.

If enacted by Congress, H.R. 2497 would amend the National Labor Relations Act to allow employers to single out unions and deny them access to their property, while permitting businesses to allow charitable organizations to solicit on their property.

"As written, the bill would not amend the National Labor Relations Act; it would virtually repeal it by allowing employers to ban all forms of union activity in every workplace in the country," Scott told the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee. "The bill would undemocratically promote censorship and anti-union discrimination. It would deprive working men and women of the opportunity to communicate with fellow workers and with members of the general public," said Scott, who was representing the AFL-CIO.

Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.), the bill's sponsor, claimed the legislation was designed only to ensure that the federal government did not place obstacles in the way of charitable solicitations, such as the Salvation Army kettles at Christmas time.

"The sponsors of the bill would have us believe that its purpose is innocent — simply to promote charitable solicitations," Scott said. "But the National Labor Relations Board has already held that an employer may permit solicitations by the Salvation Army or United Way without creating a more general right of access.

"There are some employers who are so fearful of what workers have to say that they have taken to preventing all forms of charitable solicitation as well on their property. Indeed, the instigators of this legislation are not charitable organizations; they are the very same employers whose shopping center gates are sealed against the 'threat' of worker communication. These are the same employers who shed crocodile tears over being 'forced' to deny access to charities," Scott said.

Instead of trying to restrict access, she said, Congress should "encourage more access to malls and shopping centers, rather than more isolation and censorship."



"Workers should have the same free-speech rights as charitable, religious and civic groups."

— Judith A. Scott
Teamsters General Counsel

"Workers should have the same free-speech rights as charitable, religious and civic groups. Under this bill, workers would become second-class citizens. It would become legal to discriminate against speech that advises them of their rights as employees or consumers," Scott added.

Right to handbill denied

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, meanwhile, upheld two 1995 NLRB rulings against the Food and Commercial Workers and the IBT, finding that there is no federal labor law right for unions to handbill customers on an employers' property unless the employees work for that employer.

The same principles apply to communication with customers on private property as apply to organizing employees, the court said in its Jan. 30 ruling in UFCW Local 880 vs. NLRB.

In 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Lechmere vs. NLRB that union representatives have no right to enter an employers' property unless there are no other reasonable alternative means of communicating with the employees. That principle also applies when dealing with attempts to contact consumers, Chief Judge Harry Edwards said, writing for the court in this case.

The cases involved separate efforts by UFCW Local 880 and IBT Local 243 to distribute literature on employer-owned property in shopping malls to customers of companies embroiled in labor disputes. The UFCW attempted to picket and handbill customers of Makro Inc., which operated a store in an Ohio mall, and IBT attempted to handbill at two Sears stores in Michigan.

The NLRB originally ruled for the unions in 1991 but reconsidered after the Lechmere decision, which was issued while the employers' appeals were pending.

NLRB: Tiremaker treads on rights of its workers

In a hard-hitting complaint, the National Labor Relations Board has accused Bridgestone/Firestone of a wide range of unfair labor practices that could cost the company "tens of millions of dollars" to correct.

The charges, issued by NLRB's Indianapolis regional office, claim Bridgestone/Firestone prolonged a strike by the Steelworkers and illegally fired striking workers.

As a remedy, the NLRB will seek an order requiring the company to reinstate all the illegally fired workers with back pay and benefits. In order to reinstate each employee, the company will have to dismiss any scabs hired after Oct. 10, 1994, if necessary, the complaint stated.

"While we're pleased the NLRB has vindicated our position, we'll be satisfied with nothing less than a fair contract that returns our members to their jobs," USWA President George Becker said. "If the company had simply negotiated honestly and fairly as our members asked — and as the company has done in the past — none of this would have occurred."

Making these workers whole could cost Bridgestone/Firestone "tens of millions of dollars," union spokesman Howard Scott said. Since the replacements were hired in January 1995, the company would have to pay the workers who have not returned more than a year's worth of back pay.

The complaint will be heard by an administrative law judge at a later date, said Roberto Chavarry, acting regional director of NLRB's Indianapolis office, who signed the complaint. The company had to respond to the complaint by Feb. 14.

The Jan. 31 complaint cited the company for illegally firing striking workers by falsely stating that they had been "permanently replaced," discharging strikers for lawful picket-line conduct and refusing to reinstate strikers after the union made an unconditional offer to return to work.

The company also eliminated sickness and accident benefits for union members who did not join the strike. It told workers who did not abandon the strike that they would have to show proof of "good health" in order to re-enroll in the company's medical and dental insurance plans, the complaint said. The company also is charged with only implementing part of its bargaining proposal for performance-based pay.

About 4,200 Bridgestone/Firestone employees in five states, formerly Rubber Workers, were forced out on strike July 12, 1994, almost three months after their contract had expired. The strike was the longest in tire industry history. On Jan. 4, 1995, without notice, the company claimed to have "permanently replaced" more than 2,000 strikers, which prompted the union to file charges with the NLRB.

The workers suspended their strike against the giant Japanese tire manufacturer May 22, 1995, and switched strategies in an effort for a new contract. About 900 of the workers who were "permanently replaced" still have not returned to work, the union said.

— James B. Parks

Teamsters cry foul over UPS Team Concept

Actions speak louder than words, union says

By David Kameras

In the corporate league of teams, United Parcel Service Inc. may never win a contest.

The world's largest package carrier last year put into effect its "Team Concept" program in selected locations, purportedly to give workers a greater voice on the job. Instead, management seems intent on dividing union members, increasing workloads and undermining basic contractual rights, the Teamsters say.

"Management talks about care, they talk about love, and they say things they think we'd like to hear — like, 'Now we're a partner' — but they really want to distract Teamsters members from issues like subcontracting and health and safety," said IBT President Ron Carey.

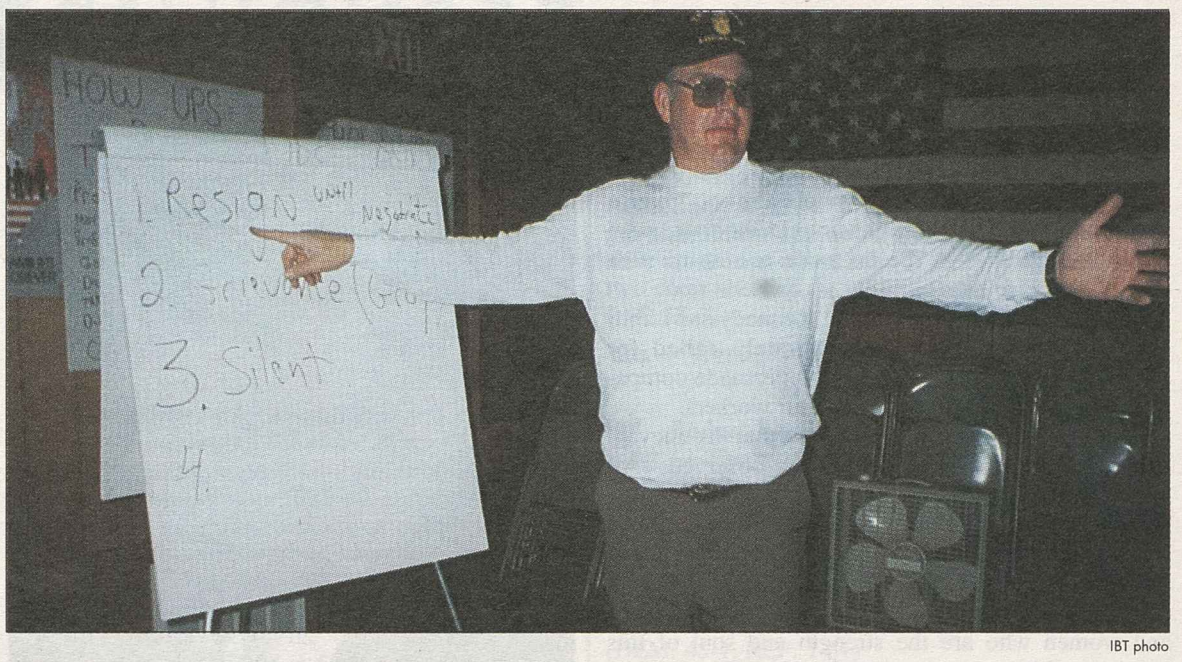
The union is concerned that self-directed teams will be pressured to discipline fellow union members and assume other supervisory tasks, all the while without regard to seniority or compensation.

IBT has demanded that UPS provide complete program details and objectives, in the meantime directing local unions not to participate.

Rather than accede to a process that ignores the collective bargaining process, "the better approach has been to use the slogan, 'Actions speak louder than words,' " the title of a video on the subject the union is distributing to members, said IBT spokesman Rand Wilson. The national master agreement is "our record of cooperation," he said.

"There would be more teamwork if the company followed the Teamsters contract," Ken Hall, interim director of IBT's parcel and small-package division, says on the tape.

In addition, the Teamsters Education Department launched a program to brief members on Team Concept. If required to attend team meetings, members are being advised to raise questions, like:



IBT photo

IBT Local 828 driver Dave Dunn briefs fellow members of the Mason City, Iowa, union on the types of perils they may expect during UPS team meetings that management is seeking to impose.

- Why is management implementing Team Concept without negotiating with the international union?
- Who will keep the money management saves by laying off supervisors?
- Why is UPS talking about teamwork while attacking members' rights?
- Can the team make decisions to improve working conditions, like increasing staff?
- Can a team make decisions to create more full-time opportunities for part-timers?

Under no circumstances should teams discuss discipline, "set up" co-workers, help eliminate jobs, violate seniority rights, pressure co-workers to work at an unhealthy speed or violate the contract, members are cautioned.

The IBT notes that while UPS says it wants to create the spirit of "one big company family," it refuses to negotiate a final agreement on key safety issues and is fighting to get Congress to gut labor and safety laws.

Those struggles on Capitol Hill contrast "with the happy talk of Team Concept," Wilson said.

Local union leaders who attended regional meetings in Chicago, Los Angeles, Orlando and Washington were unanimous in voicing opposition to the Team Concept plan, a sentiment that seems to accurately reflect that of much of the rank and file.

Chicago driver Jim Pufpaf, a member of Local 705, doesn't want less-senior workers in charge of telling more-senior workers what to do.

"Team Concept rewards people for how well they kiss up, not for the time they've dedicated to the company — and that's not right," he said. "UPS knows they're wrong, but they're trying to go around the contract and see how much they can get away with."

Fully 100 percent of Local 828 members in Mason City, Iowa, declared that they will not voluntarily participate in a new member-to-member training program until management talks with the international.

"If management was being honest about wanting more teamwork, they'd negotiate with the international union about ways to achieve that," said driver Dave Dunn. "Since they won't, a lot of people think they're just trying to bust the union."

"The true motive behind Team Concept is to destroy the union," said Local 386 steward Gaylord Phillips, who said the program had turned worker against worker at the UPS center in Ceres, Calif. Members succeeded in forcing management to drop the program.

"Giving workers extra duties and not rewarding us for it is not building teamwork," Phillips said. "With all the talk about using our skills more, the company is just trying to fool us by stroking our egos."

Labor warns TEAM Act would violate worker rights

Continued from Page 1

committees in which management would effectively dictate who would speak for the workers," Reuther said.

S. 295, formally known as the Teamwork for Employees and Management Act, would amend Section 8(a)(2) of the National Labor Relations Act, which bans company unions and bars employers from dominating or interfering with the formation of a labor organization.

A group is considered to be a labor organization if it deals with management on issues related to the terms or conditions of work, such as wages, benefits, hours of work and grievances.

The TEAM Act, sponsored by Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.), the committee chair, would add language to the section to permit employee-dominated labor organizations. The House passed a similar bill in September. President Clinton has said he will veto the measure.

Nothing in current law bars businesses from seeking suggestions from their employees, and the AFL-CIO strongly supports partnership between management and workers, Hiatt noted. "In workplace after workplace, labor unions are taking the lead in forging new partnerships with management to transform the way work is accomplished and the way labor and management relate to each other."

But where employee representatives are involved in discussing terms of employment, employees must be free to select their own representatives and to set their own agenda, Hiatt said. "It is not our view that nonunion employees should be denied a voice in the workplace. We insist only that where employees are given a voice, it should be the authentic voice of the employees, advanced by independent representatives," he said.

The bill also does not prohibit employers from intimidating teams working on issues involving wages, benefits and working conditions, he said.



Page One Photography

AFL-CIO General Counsel Jonathan Hiatt and UAW Legislative Director Alan Reuther testify against TEAM Act.

Hiatt cited a recent decision by the National Labor Relations Board, reached Dec. 18 and released Feb. 7, that shows that employers may experiment with employee participation, but cannot create or dominate a labor organization.

In the case of Vons Grocery Co., the board found that there was no pattern of using the employee-involvement committees to discuss working conditions, although the Vons committee discussed issues that fell within the domain of the union contract — dress codes and an accident point system. The issues were taken up by the Teamsters, which represented the employees, and settled through collective bargaining.

The NLRB found in three other cases that the employers had set up and dominated illegal labor organizations to discuss wages and working conditions. In all three cases — Webcor Packaging in Michigan, Dillon Stores in Kansas and Reno Hilton Resorts — the employer created company committees to make recommendations on working conditions.

It is that kind of domination that Section 8(a)(2) was designed to prevent, Hiatt said, and proponents of the TEAM Act want to re-establish.

If the bill's backers really want to increase employee empowerment and participation, "the first priority should be to reform the NLRA to make it less costly, time-consuming and threatening" for workers to exercise their right to form a union, Hiatt said.

Kennedy, Reich call for corporate responsibility

By David Kameras

Calls by the AFL-CIO to restore the social compact between workers and their employers was given a shot in the arm by two leading Democrats, who prescribed changes in the tax code to reward such cooperation.

Massachusetts Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich separately called for changes in the nation's tax code to persuade companies to better meet the needs of their workers.

Pointing to an economic recovery that "is uneven, uncertain and inequitable," Kennedy observed, "All is not well in the American economic house, because all is not well in the homes of too many American workers and their families."

"The vast majority of economic gains are being channeled to the wealthy few, while the working men and women who are the strength and soul of this country and its economy are being shortchanged," he told the Center for National Policy.

"America's workers are also America's consumers," he said. "We can only lay off so many workers, cut wages and benefits by so much and tear down government support programs for so long before we downsize the consumer sector as well. In a winner-take-all economy, eventually there will be fewer buyers and fewer winners, and ultimately even many corporate losers."

Kennedy proposed "a strategy to end the income gap — to put the American dream back in the dreams of all Americans":

- Assure reliable, substantial and sustainable growth, with the Federal Reserve addressing its charter requirement to seek to reduce unemployment.
- Create a two-tier corporate tax rate that rewards "Most Favored Companies" that create higher-quality and better-paying U.S. jobs by avoiding layoffs, paying adequate wages, sharing gains and providing training and decent benefits.
- Use incentives to encourage similar steps by firms that pay little or no taxes, like nonprofits and start-up enterprises.
- Restrain mergers and acquisitions when contrary to the public interest, and eliminate and further limit, respectively, tax deductibility for expenses and interest incurred in the process.
- Expand opportunities for union representation, including temporary workers.
- Invest in education and training at the federal, state and local levels.
- Reduce red tape for small business and prioritize research and development.
- Defend American workers from low-wage labor and sweatshop practices overseas.
- Improve incomes and benefits by raising the minimum wage, strengthening the Earned Income Tax Credit and enacting health care reform.
- Extend pension coverage to all workers.

Financing for many of these initiatives would come from the elimination of existing corporate welfare, tax loopholes and preferences that will cost the federal government more than $4 trillion over the next seven years, Kennedy maintained.



"America's workers are also America's consumers. In a winner-take-all economy, eventually there will be fewer buyers and fewer winners, and ultimately even many corporate losers."

— Sen. Edward M. Kennedy



"(Corporate executives') restricted vision of stewardship is ultimately disastrous for America — including American business. It is time for companies to focus beyond the bottom line."

— Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich

Reich's speech, delivered to the George Washington University School of Business and Public Management, called for a "new era of corporate citizenship."

"Whether we like it or not — whether we recognize it or not — corporate decision-makers have significant influence over the future strength of America's families and communities," he said. "Yet corporate executives . . . argue that they must do what is in the interest of shareholders, even at the expense of employees and the communities in which they live."

"This restricted vision of stewardship is ultimately disastrous for America — including American business," he said. "It is time for companies to focus beyond the bottom line."

Reich argued that with the end of the implicit social compact, whereby management balanced the needs of shareholders with workers, customers and the public, has come a relentless focus on maximizing returns, which "makes it less willing or able to ease the transition of the American work force to the new economy."

" 'Electronic capitalism' has replaced the gentlemanly investment system that had given 'industrial statesmen' the discretion to balance the interests of the shareholders against those of employees and communities," Reich said. "Now, any chief executive who hesitates to subordinate all else to maximize shareholder returns risks trouble.

"By the same token, a chief executive who ruthlessly subordinates all else can reap handsome rewards," he added. "We are faced with the spectacle of CEOs pocketing multi-million-dollar bonuses and stock options after abandoning their employees and communities — indeed, precisely *because* they have abandoned their employees and communities."

"Most layoffs are now permanent," he noted. "Perhaps we should call them not 'layoffs' but 'cast-offs.'"

Reich said proper incentives will be needed to convince business to take more responsibility for the American work force, and proposed reducing or eliminating corporate income taxes for companies that meet certain requirements, like upgrading the skills of their workers, providing decent health care and pension protections, offering training and placement assistance during layoffs and sharing profits.

"This era of government downsizing is also a time for corporations to size up their responsibilities to America," Reich said. "If the government is to do less, then the private sector will have to do more."

Unions press AT&T on layoff plans

AT&T's persistent refusal to release details of its planned reorganization has not helped its cause with two unions representing company workers.

The Communications Workers and Electrical Workers blasted the telecommunications giant and promised to do "whatever is necessary" to help their 100,000 members weather the massive changes coming with the layoff of 40,000 workers and the corporate restructuring that will split AT&T into three companies.

"After sending shock waves through the labor force, and indeed throughout the entire economy, with its dramatic announcements, AT&T has ignored the concerns of its workers, shareholders and customers alike," said James Irvine, a CWA vice president who handles relations with AT&T.

"They seem to be trying to inhibit our ability to raise legitimate questions about the job cuts and restructure, and that's totally unacceptable," he said.

The unions said they would contact the Securities and Exchange Commission and pursue legal actions, if necessary, to shake loose the information.

"In the past, we have at least been able to keep lines of communication open with AT&T," said IBEW President John J. Barry.

"We are asking only for what we have always received — information that will enable us to represent the interests of our members in the process," he said.

CWA President Morton Bahr called the layoff announcement "another case of mindless downsizing that is demoralizing the nation," and he noted, "they didn't even have the courtesy to give us advance warning before the bombshell announcement of the 40,000 job cuts, and now we can't even schedule a meeting."

The company has canceled several meetings at which it was slated to give the unions further information on its plans.

One concern shared by IBEW and CWA is that the newly formed companies may fail to honor AT&T's longstanding commitment to fully paid health benefits for retirees.

"Shareholders have a right to know that the commitment exists and, if necessary, we will take every action to see that this commitment to retirees is preserved," said Ed Keller, president of the IBEW council that represents most of the union's AT&T workers.

Additionally, the company has announced its plan to close the Atlanta Repair Center, despite union contracts specifying the facility is to remain open.

CWA represents 79,000 workers at the telecommunications company, while IBEW represents another 20,000.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

Workers can benefit from this tax credit

With tax season bearing down on American workers, the AFL-CIO is urging all qualified workers to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit when they file their federal tax return.

The credit is a special tax benefit that reduces the tax burden and supplements wages for low-to-moderate-income workers.

Among those potentially eligible for the credit are workers whose income was lowered because of periods of unemployment or part-time work; those whose employment is seasonal; those who were on strike all or part of the year; and workers whose take-home pay wasn't enough to garner a tax bill.

Also, workers who were raising one child in their home with a family income of less than $24,396 can get up to $2,094. Workers who were raising more than one child with a family income less than $26,673 can get a maximum credit of $3,110.

Single or married workers between the ages of 25 and 64 who were not raising children and with an income of less than $9,230 also qualify and can file any federal return.

REPORT ON CONGRESS

Labor's report on Congress tabulates the votes on major issues of importance to workers in the first session of the 104th Congress. In the tables on the pages that follow, Senate and House members have been rated R (right) and W (wrong) on the basis of their votes on these issues. The report is compiled by Mike Hall.

House

1. Unfunded Mandates/Labor Standards (H.R. 5) — During consideration of a bill to ban all unfunded mandates, an amendment was offered to exempt from the ban such labor standards as child labor and minimum wage laws. While the AFL-CIO opposed the entire bill because it is a smokescreen to attack or eliminate all federal regulations, the AFL-CIO supported the amendment as an attempt to make the bill less onerous to workers. It failed Jan. 25 by a 161-263 vote. (DEM: 160-35; REP: 0-228; I: 1-0)

Yes — Right **No — Wrong**

2. Balanced Budget Amendment/Final Passage (H.J. Res .1) — The AFL-CIO opposed a resolution calling for a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget because of massive cuts (about $1 trillion) in vital programs, the crippling of Congress' ability to fight recessions and inflation and its distortion of constitutional checks and balances. GOP backers of the bill refused to exclude and protect Social Security from the amendment's scope. The resolution passed the House Jan. 26 by a 300-132 vote. (DEM: 72-129; REP: 228-2; I: 0-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

3. Risk Assessment/Workplace Safety (H.R. 1022) — The bill, opposed by the AFL-CIO, is part of the GOP's attack on workplace health and safety, environmental and public safety standards. It would place financial considerations above the health and safety of workers by requiring cost-benefit and risk-assessment analysis procedures that would derail any attempt to develop new public health, safety or environmental standards. It passed the House Feb. 28 by a 286-141 vote. (DEM: 60-138; REP: 226-2; I: 0-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

4. GOP Tax Cuts For Rich (H.R. 1215) — This is a $189 billion tax-cut package that gives most of its benefits to wealthy families and businesses. It also contains big business tax breaks and $189 billion in spending cuts aimed at services and programs that benefit middle- and lower-income families. Opposed by the AFL-CIO, it passed the House April 5 by a 246-188 vote. (DEM: 27-176; REP: 219-11; I: 0-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

5. Transportation Appropriations/Transit Workers Section 13(c) (H.R. 2002) — An AFL-CIO-opposed provision of the 1996 transportation appropriations bill would have repealed Section 13(c) of the Mass Transit Act, which protects the collective bargaining of transit workers and offers certain job protections. An amendment, backed by the AFL-CIO, to strip the repeal from the bill passed the House July 25 by a 233-186 vote. (DEM: 188-5; REP: 44-181; I: 1-0)

Yes — Right **No — Wrong**

6. Labor/HHS Appropriations/Final Passage (H.R. 2127) — The AFL-CIO strongly opposed this bill, which slashes funds from important workplace safety and labor protection programs and nearly $4 billion from education and training services. The cuts would eliminate Goals 2000 and cut deeply into OSHA, MSHA, the NLRB and a myriad of training programs, including NAFTA-TAA, summer jobs and other youth jobs programs, as well as programs for children with disabilities and drug-free school programs. The bill passed Aug. 4 by a 219-208 vote. (DEM: 6-189; REP: 213-18; I: 0-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

7. TEAM Act/Company Unions (H.R. 743) — The bill would repeal section 8(a)2 of the National Labor Relations Act, which forbids the creation of employer-controlled and -dominated employee groups to deal with wages, benefits and working conditions — much like company unions that flourished in the 1920s and 1930s before the creation of the NLRA. Opposed by the AFL-CIO, the bill passed the House Sept. 27 by a 221-202 vote. (DEM: 15-179; REP: 206-22; I: 0-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

8. Medicare/Final Passage (H.R. 2425) —The bill slashes some $270 billion from Medicare and would increase beneficiaries' monthly premiums and significantly cut hospital reimbursements. It also puts at risk use of beneficiaries' own doctors. The bill passed on Oct. 19 by a vote of 231-201. It was later added to the budget reconciliation bill. (DEM: 4-194; REP: 227-6; I: 0-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

9. Budget Reconciliation/Final Passage (H.R. 2491) — This bill combines all the GOP entitlement spending cuts in Medicaid, student loans, federal retiree pensions and more, with tax cuts aimed mostly to benefit big business and people making up to $200,000 a year. The Medicaid program would be cut by $170 billion and block-granted, which would hurt poor children and the elderly. It also would repeal standards for nursing homes. Opposed by the AFL-CIO, the bill passed Oct. 26 by 227-203. (DEM: 4-192; REP: 223-10; I: 0-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

10. Rail Workers' Labor Protections (H.R. 2539) — A bill to eliminate the Interstate Commerce Commission also contained provisions that would have repealed certain labor protections for rail workers on some railroads when their lines are merged or acquired by new owners. An amendment to the bill, backed by the AFL-CIO, called for maintaining those protections. It was approved by the House Nov. 14 by a 241-184 vote. (DEM: 190-2; REP: 50-182; I: 1-0)

Yes — Right **No — Wrong**

11. Budget Reconciliation/Conference Report (H.R. 2491) — While some changes were made in the House-passed bill, the conference report kept the major elements opposed by the AFL-CIO. It was approved by the House Nov. 17 by a 237-189 vote. (DEM: 5-187; REP: 232-1; I: 0-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

12. Continuing Resolution (H.J. Res. 134) — Republicans offered this continuing resolution to fund welfare, veterans' benefits and the District of Columbia during the second shutdown of the federal government, which began Dec. 15, 1995. It also contained many of the budget cuts opposed by the AFL-CIO, and Democrats sought a procedural motion to force a vote on a clean continuing resolution. The vote was to table that motion, which was defeated by a 236-176 vote. (DEM: 4-175; REP: 232-0; I: 0-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

Senate

1. Unfunded Mandates/Labor Standards (S. 1) — During consideration of a bill to ban all unfunded mandates, an amendment was offered to exempt from such bans labor standards as child labor and minimum wage laws. While the AFL-CIO opposed the entire bill because it is a smoke screen to attack or eliminate all federal regulations, the AFL-CIO supported the amendment as an attempt to make the bill less onerous to workers. It was tabled Jan. 19 by a 53-44 vote. (DEM: 1-44; REP: 52-0)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

2. Balanced Budget/Social Security (H.J. Res. 1) — The AFL-CIO opposed a resolution calling for a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget because of massive cuts (about $1 trillion) in vital programs, the crippling of Congress' ability to fight recessions and inflation and its distortion of constitutional checks and balances. An amendment to exclude and protect Social Security from the amendment's scope, which the AFL-CIO supported, was tabled Feb. 14 by a 57-41 vote. (DEM: 7-39; REP: 50-2)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

3. Balanced Budget/Final Passage (H.J. Res. 1) — The Senate defeated the balanced budget amendment March 2 by a 65-35 vote, one vote short of the required two-thirds majority. (DEM: 14-33; REP: 51-2)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

4. Striker Replacement Executive Order (H.R. 889) — During consideration of the Defense Department supplemental appropriation, an amendment was offered to bar the White House from using funds to implement its order barring the government from doing business with contractors who use permanent replacement workers. Backers of the order filibustered the amendment and an AFL-CIO-opposed motion to shut off debate failed March 15 by a 58-39 margin, two votes short of the required number. (DEM: 5-39; REP 53-0)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

5. Budget Resolution/Medicare (S. Con. Res. 13) — The resolution would have slashed about $1 trillion in vital spending and forced working families to pay more for Medicare and higher education in order to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. An amendment was offered to restore $100 billion of the $170 billion in tax cuts for Medicare and Medicaid. The amendment, backed by the AFL-CIO, failed on May 22 by a 46-52 vote. (DEM: 45-1; REP: 1-51)

Yes — Right **No — Wrong**

6. Budget Resolution/Final Passage (H. Con. Res. 67) — After inserting its version of Medicare cuts and tax breaks for the wealthy into the House measure, the Senate passed the budget resolution May 25 by a 57-42 vote. (DEM: 3-42; REP: 54-0)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

7. Regulatory Reform/OSHA (S. 343) — The AFL-CIO opposed a bill drafted under the guise of regulatory reform that threatened workplace health and safety and environmental standards. An amendment supported by the AFL-CIO would have protected OSHA and MSHA safety standards. That was tabled July 14 by a 58-39 vote. (DEM: 7-37; REP: 51-2)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

8. Regulatory Reform/Cloture (S. 343) — The entire bill, opposed by the AFL-CIO, would have decimated workplace health and safety, environmental and public health safeguards. Opponents staged a filibuster against the bill. Two earlier attempts to end the debate failed and on July 20 a third attempt was defeated by a 58-40 vote. Sixty votes are required for cloture. (DEM: 4-40; REP: 54-0)

Yes — Wrong **No —Right**

9. Appropriations/Affirmative Action (H.R. 1854) — An amendment to the legislative appropriations bill would have overturned all federal affirmative action programs. Opposed by the AFL-CIO, the amendment failed July 20 by a 36-61 vote. (DEM: 3-42; REP: 33-19)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

10. Minimum Wage/Budget Reconciliation (S. 1357) — During Senate debate on the budget reconciliation, a motion was offered to suspend the rules to allow a vote on legislation to increase the minimum wage. The motion, backed by the AFL-CIO, failed by a 51-48 vote Oct. 27, nine votes short of the number required to suspend the rule. (DEM: 46-0; REP: 5-48)

Yes — Right **No — Wrong**

11. Continuing Resolution/Final Passage (H.J. Res. 115) — During debate on a temporary spending bill required to keep the government funded and avoid a shutdown, Republicans attached a Medicare premium increase and several other provisions opposed by the AFL-CIO. The bill passed Nov. 13 by a 50-46 vote. (DEM: 0-44; REP: 50-2)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

12. Budget Reconciliation/Conference Report (H.R. 2491) — This bill combines all the GOP entitlement spending cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, student loans, federal retiree pensions and more, with tax cuts aimed mostly to benefit big business and people making up to $200,000 a year. The Medicaid program would be cut by $170 billion and block-granted, which would hurt poor children and the elderly. It also would repeal standards for nursing homes. While some changes were made in the House-passed bill, the conference report maintained the major elements opposed by the AFL-CIO. It passed the Senate Nov. 17 by a 52-47 vote. (DEM: 0-46; REP: 52-1)

Yes — Wrong **No — Right**

HOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

1 - Unfunded Mandates/Labor Standards
2 - Balanced Budget Amendment
3 - Regulatory Reform/Workplace Safety
4 - GOP Tax Cuts for the Rich
5 - Transit Workers Bargaining Rights/Section 13(C)
6 - Labor/HHS Appropriations
7 - TEAM Act/Company Unions
8 - Medicare
9 - Budget Reconciliation
10 - Rail Workers' Labor Protections
11 - Budget Reconciliation/Conference Report
12 - Continuing Resolution

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total Votes 1995 R	Total Votes 1995 W	Lifetime Total Votes R	Lifetime Total Votes W	1995 Right Percentage %	Lifetime Right Percentage %
Alabama																		
1 CALLAHAN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	0	11	22	116	0	16
2 EVERETT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	7	26	8	21
3 BROWDER (D)	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	50	26	75	66
4 BEVILL (D)	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	242	146	75	62
5 CRAMER (D)	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	8	4	42	15	67	74
6 BACHUS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	31	0	6
7 HILLIARD (D)	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	10	0	31	0	100	100
Alaska																		
YOUNG, DON (R)	W	W	W	R	R	A	R	W	W	R	W	W	4	7	146	179	36	45
Arizona																		
1 SALMON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
2 PASTOR (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	44	5	100	90
3 STUMP (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	18	263	0	6
4 SHADEGG (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
5 KOLBE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	13	129	0	9
6 HAYWORTH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
Arkansas																		
1 LINCOLN (D)	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	7	5	19	14	58	58
2 THORNTON (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	49	7	92	88
3 HUTCHINSON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	31	0	6
4 DICKEY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	3	30	0	9
California																		
1 RIGGS (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
2 HERGER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	15	94	0	14
3 FAZIO (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	217	27	100	89
4 DOOLITTLE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	5	50	0	9
5 MATSUI (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	210	32	100	87
6 WOOLSEY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	33	0	100	100
7 MILLER, GEORGE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	290	29	100	91
8 PELOSI (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	101	6	100	94
9 DELLUMS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	352	24	100	94
10 BAKER, BILL (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	32	0	3
11 POMBO (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	3	29	0	9
12 LANTOS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	11	0	190	10	100	95
13 STARK (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	11	0	306	31	100	91
14 ESHOO (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	31	2	100	94
15 CAMPBELL (R)	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	W	0	1	0	1	0	0
16 LOFGREN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	12	0	100	100
17 FARR (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	24	2	100	92
18 CONDIT (D)	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	8	4	56	18	67	76
19 RADANOVICH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
20 DOOLEY (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	8	4	36	21	67	63
21 THOMAS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	30	203	0	13
22 SEASTRAND (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
23 GALLEGLY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	16	93	0	15
24 BEILENSON (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	11	0	214	69	100	76
25 MCKEON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	31	0	6
26 BERMAN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	11	0	145	19	100	88
27 MOORHEAD (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	26	323	0	7
28 DREIER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	3	201	0	1
29 WAXMAN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	288	34	100	89
30 BECERRA (D)	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	29	3	100	91
31 MARTINEZ (D)	R	R	A	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	10	0	167	7	100	96
32 DIXON (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	228	9	100	96
33 ROYBAL-ALLARD (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	30	3	100	91
34 TORRES (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	162	7	100	96
35 WATERS (D)	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	53	2	100	96
36 HARMAN (D)	W	W	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	8	2	25	6	80	81
37 TUCKER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	A	A	A	A	I	6	0	26	1	100	96
38 HORN (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	12	21	17	36
39 ROYCE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	31	0	6
40 LEWIS, JERRY (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	1	10	32	196	9	14
41 KIM (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	33	0	0
42 BROWN, GEORGE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	336	35	100	91
43 CALVERT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	31	0	3
44 BONO (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
45 ROHRABACHER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	9	71	0	11
46 DORNAN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	23	221	0	9
47 COX (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	5	74	0	6
48 PACKARD (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	10	158	0	6
49 BILBRAY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
50 FILNER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	A	10	0	29	2	100	94
51 CUNNINGHAM (R)	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	6	50	0	11
52 HUNTER (R)	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	40	159	0	20
Colorado																		
1 SCHROEDER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	271	75	100	78
2 SKAGGS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	11	0	91	18	100	83
3 MCINNIS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	31	0	6
4 ALLARD (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	54	0	2
5 HEFLEY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	12	98	0	11
6 SCHAEFER (R)	W	W	W	W	A	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	1	10	31	134	9	19
Connecticut																		
1 KENNELLY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	173	19	100	90
2 GEJDENSON (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	198	8	100	96
3 DELAURO (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	53	4	100	93
4 SHAYS (R)	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	51	53	8	49
5 FRANKS, GARY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	11	45	8	20
6 JOHNSON, NANCY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	75	95	8	44
Delaware																		
CASTLE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	7	25	8	22
Florida																		
1 SCARBOROUGH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
2 PETERSON, PETE (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	43	13	75	77
3 BROWN, CORRINE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	31	2	100	94
4 FOWLER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	31	0	6
5 THURMAN (D)	W	R	W	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	2	29	3	82	91
6 STEARNS (R)	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	10	67	0	13
7 MICA (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	3	30	0	9
8 MCCOLLUM (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	17	184	0	8
9 BILIRAKIS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	40	130	8	24
10 YOUNG, BILL (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	60	316	0	16
11 GIBBONS (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	235	174	92	57
12 CANADY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	32	0	3
13 MILLER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	3	30	0	9
14 GOSS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	10	71	0	12
15 WELDON, DAVID (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
16 FOLEY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
17 MEEK (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	30	3	100	91
18 ROS-LEHTINEN (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	31	43	17	42
19 JOHNSTON, HARRY (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	10	2	64	15	83	81
20 DEUTSCH (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	29	4	92	88
21 DIAZ-BALART (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	20	13	25	61
22 SHAW (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	24	181	0	12
23 HASTINGS, ALCEE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	30	2	100	94
Georgia																		
1 KINGSTON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	31	0	6
2 BISHOP (D)	A	A	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	1	26	5	90	84
3 COLLINS, MICHAEL (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	5	28	0	15
4 LINDER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	32	0	3
5 LEWIS, JOHN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	109	2	100	98
6 GINGRICH (R)	S	W	S	W	S	W	S	W	W	S	W	S	0	6	23	209	0	10
7 BARR (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
8 CHAMBLISS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
9 DEAL (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	8	25	0	32
10 NORWOOD (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
11 MCKINNEY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	33	0	100	100
Hawaii																		
1 ABERCROMBIE (D)	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	52	2	100	96
2 MINK (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	11	0	60	0	100	100

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total Votes 1995 R	Total Votes 1995 W	Lifetime Total Votes R	Lifetime Total Votes W	1995 Right Percentage %	Lifetime Right Percentage %
Idaho																		
1 CHENOWETH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
2 CRAPO (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	31	0	6
Illinois																		
1 RUSH (D)	A	A	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	0	29	1	100	97
2 JACKSON (D)	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	R	1	0	1	0	100	100
3 LIPINSKI (D)	R	W	A	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	2	141	22	82	87
4 GUTIERREZ (D)	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	10	0	31	0	100	100
5 FLANAGAN (R)	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	3	9	25	25
6 HYDE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	51	278	0	16
7 COLLINS, CARDISS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	11	0	317	15	100	95
8 CRANE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	18	343	0	5
9 YATES (D)	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	A	R	A	9	0	417	35	100	92
10 PORTER (R)	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	31	184	8	14
11 WELLER (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	2	10	17	17
12 COSTELLO (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	75	10	83	88
13 FAWELL (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	10	132	0	7
14 HASTERT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	12	99	0	11
15 EWING (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	5	48	0	9
16 MANZULLO (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	33	0	0
17 EVANS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	165	6	100	96
18 LAHOOD (R)	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	2	10	2	10	17	17
19 POSHARD (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	67	14	83	83
20 DURBIN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	152	20	100	88
Indiana																		
1 VISCLOSKY (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	127	15	92	89
2 MCINTOSH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
3 ROEMER (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	37	19	75	66
4 SOUDER (R)	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
5 BUYER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	3	30	0	9
6 BURTON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	21	148	0	12
7 MYERS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	A	0	11	65	329	0	16
8 HOSTETTLER (R)	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
9 HAMILTON (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	180	134	75	57
10 JACOBS (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	10	2	296	95	83	76
Iowa																		
1 LEACH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	96	191	8	33
2 NUSSLE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	7	50	0	12
3 LIGHTFOOT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	1	11	15	126	8	11
4 GANSKE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
5 LATHAM (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
Kansas																		
1 ROBERTS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	10	194	0	5
2 BROWNBACK (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
3 MEYERS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	24	115	0	17
4 TIAHRT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
Kentucky																		
1 WHITFIELD (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	2	10	17	17
2 LEWIS, RON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	15	0	12
3 WARD (D)	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	11	0	100	100
4 BUNNING (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	11	98	0	10
5 ROGERS (R)	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	59	148	17	29
6 BAESLER (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	23	10	75	70
Louisiana																		
1 LIVINGSTON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	33	262	0	11
2 JEFFERSON (D)	A	R	R	R	A	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	9	0	49	5	100	91
3 TAUZIN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	81	121	0	40
4 FIELDS, CLEO (D)	A	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	A	R	8	0	28	0	100	100
5 MCCRERY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	7	81	0	8
6 BAKER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	11	95	0	10
7 HAYES (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	4	8	61	46	33	57
Maine																		
1 LONGLEY (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
2 BALDACCI (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	12	0	100	100
Maryland																		
1 GILCHREST (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	A	0	11	12	43	0	22
2 EHRLICH (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
3 CARDIN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	103	8	100	93
4 WYNN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	32	1	100	97
5 HOYER (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	187	15	92	93
6 BARTLETT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	30	0	6
7 MFUME (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	109	2	100	98
8 MORELLA (R)	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	3	9	64	47	25	58
Massachusetts																		
1 OLVER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	51	2	100	96
2 NEAL (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	72	3	100	96
3 BLUTE (R)	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	W	R	W	W	4	8	15	18	33	45
4 FRANK (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	190	16	100	92
5 MEEHAN (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	27	6	92	82
6 TORKILDSEN (R)	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	W	R	W	W	4	8	12	21	33	36
7 MARKEY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	260	24	100	92
8 KENNEDY, JOSEPH (D)	A	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	1	100	9	91	92
9 MOAKLEY (D)	R	R	R	R	A	A	A	R	R	R	R	R	9	0	324	19	100	94
10 STUDDS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	325	30	100	92
Michigan																		
1 STUPAK (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	32	1	92	97
2 HOEKSTRA (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	32	0	3
3 EHLERS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	21	0	0
4 CAMP (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	5	52	0	9
5 BARCIA (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	29	4	83	88
6 UPTON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	28	83	0	25
7 SMITH, NICK (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	29	0	6
8 CHRYSLER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
9 KILDEE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	275	13	100	95
10 BONIOR (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	266	14	100	95
11 KNOLLENBERG (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	33	0	0
12 LEVIN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	164	8	100	95
13 RIVERS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	12	0	100	100
14 CONYERS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	11	0	346	26	100	93
15 COLLINS, BARBARA (D)	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	52	1	100	98
16 DINGELL (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	412	33	100	93
Minnesota																		
1 GUTKNECHT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
2 MINGE (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	21	12	75	64
3 RAMSTAD (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	14	43	0	25
4 VENTO (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	266	20	100	93
5 SABO (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	228	18	100	93
6 LUTHER (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	11	1	92	92
7 PETERSON, COLLIN (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	40	17	75	70
8 OBERSTAR (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	306	23	100	93

Key:

R = Voted right.
W = Voted wrong.
A = Absent, did not vote or make position known.
S = Speaker
I = Not in office.
Number before each name shows congressional district.

VOTED IN THE HOUSE IN 1995

1 - Unfunded Mandates/Labor Standards
2 - Balanced Budget Amendment
3 - Regulatory Reform/Workplace Safety
4 - GOP Tax Cuts for the Rich
5 - Transit Workers Bargaining Rights/Section 13(C)
6 - Labor/HHS Appropriations
7 - TEAM Act/Company Unions
8 - Medicare
9 - Budget Reconciliation
10 - Rail Workers' Labor Protections
11 - Budget Reconciliation/Conference Report
12 - Continuing Resolution

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total Votes 1995 R	Total Votes 1995 W	Lifetime Total Votes R	Lifetime Total Votes W	1995 Right Percentage %	Lifetime Right Percentage %
Mississippi																		
1 WICKER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
2 THOMPSON (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	26	1	100	96
3 MONTGOMERY (D)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	68	327	0	17
4 PARKER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	21	58	0	27
5 TAYLOR, GENE (D)	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	R	R	W	W	R	5	7	32	38	42	46
Missouri																		
1 CLAY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	337	14	100	96
2 TALENT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	32	0	3
3 GEPHARDT (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	233	39	100	86
4 SKELTON (D)	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	185	89	75	68
5 MCCARTHY (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	11	1	92	92
6 DANNER (D)	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	27	6	75	82
7 HANCOCK (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	6	75	0	7
8 EMERSON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	44	159	0	22
9 VOLKMER (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	A	R	R	A	R	R	8	2	210	72	80	74
Montana																		
WILLIAMS, PAT (D)	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	A	10	0	210	26	100	89
Nebraska																		
1 BEREUTER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	48	198	8	20
2 CHRISTENSEN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
3 BARRETT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	5	52	0	9
Nevada																		
1 ENSIGN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
2 VUCANOVICH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	18	152	0	11
New Hampshire																		
1 ZELIFF (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	5	51	0	9
2 BASS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
New Jersey																		
1 ANDREWS (D)	W	W	R	W	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	8	3	45	11	73	80
2 LOBIONDO (R)	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	W	W	W	5	7	5	7	42	42
3 SAXTON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	2	10	48	93	17	34
4 SMITH, CHRISTOPHER (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	W	6	6	145	62	50	70
5 ROUKEMA (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	67	133	8	34
6 PALLONE (D)	R	W	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	70	11	83	86
7 FRANKS (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	8	24	17	25
8 MARTINI (R)	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	4	8	4	8	33	33
9 TORRICELLI (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	152	12	83	93
10 PAYNE, DONALD (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	76	1	100	99
11 FRELINGHUYSEN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
12 ZIMMER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	R	W	W	W	3	9	17	40	25	30
13 MENENDEZ (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	32	1	100	97
New Mexico																		
1 SCHIFF (R)	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	24	58	25	29
2 SKEEN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	27	180	0	13
3 RICHARDSON (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	152	19	92	89
New York																		
1 FORBES (R)	W	W	W	W	A	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	2	9	2	9	18	18
2 LAZIO (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	13	20	25	39
3 KING (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	10	23	25	30
4 FRISA (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	3	9	25	25
5 ACKERMAN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	158	4	100	98
6 FLAKE (D)	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	A	9	0	100	5	100	95
7 MANTON (D)	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	128	9	92	93
8 NADLER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	32	0	100	100
9 SCHUMER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	181	17	100	91
10 TOWNS (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	157	4	92	98
11 OWENS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	164	2	100	99
12 VELAZQUEZ (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	33	0	100	100
13 MOLINARI (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	27	40	0	40
14 MALONEY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	31	2	100	94
15 RANGEL (D)	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	347	18	100	95
16 SERRANO (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	62	3	100	95
17 ENGEL (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	78	1	100	99
18 LOWEY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	78	3	100	96
19 KELLY (R)	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	4	8	4	8	33	33
20 GILMAN (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	264	87	25	75
21 MCNULTY (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	72	7	83	91
22 SOLOMON (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	A	W	W	R	W	W	2	9	66	168	18	28
23 BOEHLERT (R)	W	W	R	W	R	W	R	W	R	W	W	W	4	8	116	56	33	67
24 MCHUGH (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	R	R	W	W	4	8	14	19	33	42
25 WALSH (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	38	43	25	47
26 HINCHEY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	33	0	100	100
27 PAXON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	8	73	0	10
28 SLAUGHTER (D)	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	102	6	100	94
29 LAFALCE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	275	49	100	85
30 QUINN (R)	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	W	W	R	W	4	8	17	16	33	52
31 HOUGHTON (R)	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	W	R	W	W	4	8	39	70	33	36
North Carolina																		
1 CLAYTON (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	32	1	100	97
2 FUNDERBURK (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
3 JONES (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
4 HEINEMAN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
5 BURR (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
6 COBLE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	21	121	0	15
7 ROSE (D)	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	8	3	229	102	73	69
8 HEFNER (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	194	124	83	61
9 MYRICK (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
10 BALLENGER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	12	97	0	11
11 TAYLOR, CHARLES (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	10	47	8	18
12 WATT (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	33	0	100	100
North Dakota																		
POMEROY (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	25	7	92	78
Ohio																		
1 CHABOT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
2 PORTMAN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	28	0	0
3 HALL, TONY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	11	0	195	43	100	82
4 OXLEY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	15	185	0	8
5 GILLMOR (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	18	61	8	23
6 CREMEANS (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	2	10	17	17
7 HOBSON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	11	46	0	19
8 BOEHNER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	55	0	4
9 KAPTUR (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	153	13	92	92
10 HOKE (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	6	26	17	19
11 STOKES (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	351	17	100	95
12 KASICH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	25	146	0	15
13 BROWN, SHERROD (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	30	3	92	91
14 SAWYER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	101	10	100	91
15 PRYCE (R)	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	2	30	0	6
16 REGULA (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	130	228	8	36
17 TRAFICANT (D)	R	R	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	134	6	75	96
18 NEY (R)	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	4	8	4	8	33	33
Oklahoma																		
1 LARGENT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	12	0	7
2 COBURN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
3 BREWSTER (D)	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	R	A	R	6	5	29	27	55	52
4 WATTS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	0	12	0	0
5 ISTOOK (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	32	0	3
6 LUCAS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	17	0	6
Oregon																		
1 FURSE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	31	2	100	94
2 COOLEY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
3 WYDEN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	170	35	100	83
4 DEFAZIO (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	97	11	92	90
5 BUNN (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	2	10	17	17
Pennsylvania																		
1 FOGLIETTA (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	11	0	189	8	100	96
2 FATTAH (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	12	0	100	100
3 BORSKI (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	161	7	100	96
4 KLINK (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	32	1	100	97
5 CLINGER (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	85	155	8	35
6 HOLDEN (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	31	2	92	94
7 WELDON, CURT (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	A	2	9	54	49	18	52
8 GREENWOOD (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	31	0	6
9 SHUSTER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	59	287	0	17
10 MCDADE (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	269	137	25	66
11 KANJORSKI (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	130	12	100	92
12 MURTHA (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	297	41	100	88
13 FOX (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	2	10	2	10	17	17
14 COYNE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	198	9	100	96
15 MCHALE (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	28	5	92	85
16 WALKER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	35	253	0	12
17 GEKAS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	26	145	0	15
18 DOYLE (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	10	2	83	83
19 GOODLING (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	82	237	0	26
20 MASCARA (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	12	0	100	100
21 ENGLISH (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	3	9	25	25
Rhode Island																		
1 KENNEDY, PATRICK (D)	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	11	0	100	100
2 REED (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	53	4	100	93
South Carolina																		
1 SANFORD (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
2 SPENCE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	65	305	0	18
3 GRAHAM (R)	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	0	11	0	0
4 INGLIS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	3	30	0	9
5 SPRATT (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	115	54	83	68
6 CLYBURN (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	30	2	92	94
South Dakota																		
JOHNSON, TIMOTHY P. (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	90	21	75	81
Tennessee																		
1 QUILLEN (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	81	328	17	20
2 DUNCAN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	21	60	8	26
3 WAMP (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
4 HILLEARY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
5 CLEMENT (D)	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	68	22	75	76
6 GORDON (D)	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	110	29	75	79
7 BRYANT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
8 TANNER (D)	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	7	5	47	34	58	58
9 FORD (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	177	23	92	89
Texas																		
1 CHAPMAN (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	8	3	88	43	73	67
2 WILSON (D)	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	8	3	234	95	73	71
3 JOHNSON, SAM (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	4	52	0	7
4 HALL, RALPH (D)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	2	10	68	133	17	34
5 BRYANT, JOHN (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	151	15	92	91
6 BARTON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	8	127	0	6
7 ARCHER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	16	362	0	4
8 FIELDS, JACK (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	16	189	8	8
9 STOCKMAN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	2	10	17	17
10 DOGGETT (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	12	0	100	100
11 EDWARDS (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	A	7	4	37	19	64	66
12 GEREN (D)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	2	10	30	43	17	41
13 THORNBERRY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
14 LAUGHLIN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	31	42	0	42
15 DE LA GARZA (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	249	144	83	63
16 COLEMAN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	149	20	100	88
17 STENHOLM (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	8	4	51	191	67	21
18 JACKSON-LEE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	12	0	100	100
19 COMBEST (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	16	126	0	11
20 GONZALEZ (D)	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	392	35	100	92
21 SMITH, LAMAR (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	16	93	0	15
22 DELAY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	4	136	0	3
23 BONILLA (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	33	0	0
24 FROST (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	189	43	83	81
25 BENTSEN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	12	0	100	100
26 ARMEY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	3	139	0	2
27 ORTIZ (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	135	31	75	81
28 TEJEDA (D)	W	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	26	7	83	79
29 GREEN (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	30	2	92	94
30 JOHNSON, EDDIE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	30	3	100	91
Utah																		
1 HANSEN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	8	191	0	4
2 WALDHOLTZ (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
3 ORTON (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	29	28	75	51
Vermont																		
SANDERS (I)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	57	0	100	100
Virginia																		
1 BATEMAN (R)	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	18	152	0	11
2 PICKETT (D)	W	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	69	42	83	62
3 SCOTT (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	32	1	100	97
4 SISISKY (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	8	3	110	59	73	65
5 PAYNE, LEWIS (D)	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	A	7	4	44	41	64	52
6 GOODLATTE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	32	0	3
7 BLILEY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	26	181	0	13
8 MORAN (D)	W	W	W	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	8	4	43	13	67	77
9 BOUCHER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	140	27	100	84
10 WOLF (R)	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	36	170	8	17
11 DAVIS (R)	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
Washington																		
1 WHITE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
2 METCALF (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	3	9	3	9	25	25
3 SMITH, LINDA (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
4 HASTINGS, RICHARD (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
5 NETHERCUTT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
6 DICKS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	239	43	100	85
7 MCDERMOTT (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	11	0	72	8	100	90
8 DUNN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	31	0	3
9 TATE (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
West Virginia																		
1 MOLLOHAN (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	161	10	92	94
2 WISE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	161	9	100	95
3 RAHALL (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	255	25	100	91
Wisconsin																		
1 NEUMANN (R)	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	A	W	2	9	2	9	18	18
2 KLUG (R)	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	17	40	8	30
3 GUNDERSON (R)	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	2	10	60	143	17	30
4 KLECZKA (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	130	22	92	86
5 BARRETT, THOMAS (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	31	2	100	94
6 PETRI (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	54	189	0	22
7 OBEY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	340	45	100	88
8 ROTH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	30	206	0	13
9 SENSENBRENNER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	22	220	0	9
Wyoming																		
CUBIN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0

HOW YOUR SENATORS VOTED

1 - Unfunded Mandates/Public-Private Parity/Labor Standards
2 - Balanced Budget/Protecting Social Security
3 - Balanced Budget/Final Passage
4 - Striker Replacement/Executive Order
5 - Budget Resolution/Medicare
6 - Budget Resolution/Final Passage
7 - Regulatory Reform/Assault on Workplace Safety
8 - Regulatory Reform/Assault on Workplace Safety/Cloture
9 - Legislative Appropriations/Affirmative Action
10 - Minimum Wage/Budget Reconciliation
11 - Continuing Resolution/Final Passage
12 - Budget Reconciliation/Conference Report

													1995 Total Votes		Lifetime Total Votes		1995 Right Percentage	Lifetime Right Percentage
Alabama	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	R	W	R	W	%	%
HEFLIN (D)	W	R	W	R	R	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	8	4	157	83	67	65
SHELBY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	63	33	0	66
Alaska																		
MURKOWSKI (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	45	150	0	23
STEVENS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	148	205	8	42
Arizona																		
KYL (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
MCCAIN (R)	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	15	82	8	15
Arkansas																		
BUMPERS (D)	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	215	101	92	68
PRYOR (D)	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	149	83	92	64
California																		
BOXER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	29	2	100	94
FEINSTEIN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	28	3	100	90
Colorado																		
BROWN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	6	49	0	11
CAMPBELL (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	3	9	18	12	22	60
Connecticut																		
DODD (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	182	17	92	91
LIEBERMAN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	62	11	100	85
Delaware																		
BIDEN (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	262	55	92	83
ROTH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	73	287	8	20
Florida																		
GRAHAM (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	78	20	92	80
MACK (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	10	63	0	14
Georgia																		
COVERDELL (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	31	0	0
NUNN (D)	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	7	5	159	195	58	45
Hawaii																		
AKAKA (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	11	0	57	5	100	92
INOUYE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	A	R	R	R	10	0	329	36	100	90
Idaho																		
CRAIG (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	8	47	0	15
KEMPTHORNE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	2	29	0	6
Illinois																		
MOSELEY-BRAUN (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	24	7	83	77
SIMON (D)	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	105	20	83	84
Indiana																		
COATS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	13	61	0	18
LUGAR (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	A	W	0	10	28	251	0	10
Iowa																		
GRASSLEY (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	33	173	0	16
HARKIN (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	116	14	92	89
Kansas																		
DOLE (R)	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	1	11	56	307	8	15
KASSEBAUM (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	45	192	8	19
Kentucky																		
FORD (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	251	69	92	78
MCCONNELL (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	19	112	0	15
Louisiana																		
BREAUX (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	9	3	76	21	75	78
JOHNSTON (D)	A	R	R	R	R	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	9	2	181	140	82	56
Maine																		
COHEN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	4	8	90	150	33	38
SNOWE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	3	9	3	9	25	25
Maryland																		
MIKULSKI (D)	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	87	7	100	93
SARBANES (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	265	12	100	96
Massachusetts																		
KENNEDY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	350	29	100	92
KERRY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	122	11	100	92
Michigan																		
ABRAHAM (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
LEVIN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	224	19	100	92
Minnesota																		
GRAMS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
WELLSTONE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	50	5	100	91
Mississippi																		
COCHRAN (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	37	202	8	15
LOTT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	10	62	0	14
Missouri																		
ASHCROFT (R)	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	0	10	0	10	0	0
BOND (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	19	71	8	21
Montana																		
BAUCUS (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	10	2	181	59	83	75
BURNS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	9	65	0	12
Nebraska																		
EXON (D)	R	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	8	4	127	105	67	55
KERREY (D)	R	W	R	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	56	14	75	80

													1995 Total Votes		Lifetime Total Votes		1995 Right Percentage	Lifetime Right Percentage
Nevada	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	R	W	R	W	%	%
BRYAN (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	61	13	92	82
REID (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	85	11	100	89
New Hampshire																		
GREGG (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	30	0	0
SMITH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	7	47	0	13
New Jersey																		
BRADLEY (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	11	0	200	35	100	85
LAUTENBERG (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	145	15	100	91
New Mexico																		
BINGAMAN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	131	29	100	82
DOMENICI (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	74	261	8	22
New York																		
D'AMATO (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	94	107	0	47
MOYNIHAN (D)	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	251	24	100	91
North Carolina																		
FAIRCLOTH (R)	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	0	10	1	27	0	4
HELMS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	32	284	0	10
North Dakota																		
CONRAD (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	81	17	100	83
DORGAN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	25	4	100	86
Ohio																		
DEWINE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
GLENN (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	251	60	100	81
Oklahoma																		
INHOFE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	1	12	0	8
NICKLES (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	9	196	0	4
Oregon																		
HATFIELD (R)	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	2	10	186	179	17	51
PACKWOOD (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	I	I	I	1	8	167	196	11	46
Pennsylvania																		
SANTORUM (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
SPECTER (R)	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	R	W	W	4	8	133	71	33	65
Rhode Island																		
CHAFEE (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	117	162	8	42
PELL (D)	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	10	0	372	39	100	91
South Carolina																		
HOLLINGS (D)	R	R	R	W	R	R	W	R	W	R	R	R	9	3	225	145	75	61
THURMOND (R)	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	54	395	0	12
South Dakota																		
DASCHLE (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	81	16	100	84
PRESSLER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	61	166	0	27
Tennessee																		
FRIST (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0
THOMPSON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	1	11	8	8
Texas																		
GRAMM (R)	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	11	6	124	0	5
HUTCHISON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	1	26	8	4
Utah																		
BENNETT (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	30	0	0
HATCH (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	34	241	0	12
Vermont																		
JEFFORDS (R)	W	W	W	A	R	W	R	W	R	R	W	W	4	7	31	38	36	45
LEAHY (D)	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	271	47	100	85
Virginia																		
ROBB (D)	R	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	9	3	53	21	75	72
WARNER (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	43	202	0	18
Washington																		
GORTON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	12	61	0	16
MURRAY (D)	R	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	0	28	2	100	93
West Virginia																		
BYRD (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	11	1	340	108	92	76
ROCKEFELLER (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	118	15	100	89
Wisconsin																		
FEINGOLD (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	12	0	30	1	100	97
KOHL (D)	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	11	1	56	18	92	76
Wyoming																		
SIMPSON (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	1	11	19	220	8	8
THOMAS (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0	12	0	12	0	0

Key:

R = Voted right.
W = Voted wrong.
A = Absent, did not vote or make position known.
S = Speaker
I = Not in office.

OCAW expects Amoco pact to set pattern

By James B. Parks

After the union rejected three previous contract proposals, members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers at Amoco refineries around the country are voting on a tentative agreement that is expected to set the pattern for future contracts in the oil industry.

The agreement ended the possibility of a strike that could have crippled the nation's oil refineries at the height of the winter demand for heating oil and gasoline. Other oil companies are expected to follow Amoco's lead in their negotiations with OCAW, union President Robert E. Wages said.

The three-year agreement provides for a general wage increase of $1.51 per hour over the term, beginning with an immediate 2.1 percent increase, or 40 cents an hour; a 2.5 percent increase, or 50 cents an hour, in 1997; and a 3 percent increase, or 61 cents an hour, in 1998.

The union and the company also agreed on changes in layoff procedures, increasing the required notice from 60 days to 90 days and allowing the union greater input on how to minimize or avoid layoffs.

The pact also provides for comprehensive "effects bargaining" to lessen the impact of layoffs, including setting up programs for vocational training and outplacement assistance and benefit packages such as severance pay, pensions and medical and group life insurance.

On the key issue of medical care, the new contract provides "two acceptable approaches," with Amoco continuing to pay 80 percent of premium costs or paying fixed amounts, which are designed to "protect against future increases," Wages said.

After rejecting the third contract offer Jan. 29, the union began making preparations for selective strikes across the country. But negotiators agreed to extend the existing contracts on a 24-hour basis and continue talking.

The last rejected offer included a three-year agreement, a lump-sum bonus of $750 to be paid to each employee in lieu of a first-year wage increase and increases of 1.5 percent in each of the remaining two years.

That was slightly better than the second offer, which would have been a two-year agreement with a $500 bonus in the first year and a 1.5 percent wage increase in the second.

Neither proposal made any change in the company's contribution to the cost of hospital-medical plan premiums, which would mean an increase in out-of-pocket costs for the workers should the premiums increase, union spokesman Rod Rogers said.

The oil industry contracts, which cover some 40,000 OCAW members working for about 300 companies in oil refining, petrochemical processing, pipelines, production and marketing operations, expired Jan. 31. Some 4,500 OCAW members work for Amoco.



Susan Krasnoger/HERE

Members of HERE Locals 34 and 35 rally in solidarity against Yale University. About 137 workers were arrested for civil disobedience during the Jan. 10 rally in New Haven, Conn.

HERE locals stick together at Yale

Strikers get wage share as second unit prepares

By Muriel H. Cooper

Yale University's 2,600 clerical and technical employees began an innovative six-week strike Feb. 7 that relies on support from a sister local, which is waiting its turn to strike if the administration does not address issues of work rules, wages and retiree benefits.

The workers, members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 34, have been in contract negotiations since Nov. 2, along with HERE Local 35, which represents 1,100 service and maintenance employees. Local 35 will continue to work and share their wages with the strikers.

Local 34 members said they would remain on strike until an agreement is reached or until March 25, whichever comes first. If no agreement is reached by late March, Local 35 may strike the New Haven university while members of Local 34 return to work, union spokesperson Deborah Chernoff said.

"It was clear that Yale was going to try to starve us out . . . in an effort to weaken the union. We had to figure out a way to outlast them," she said.

The university has offered to extend both contracts to allow negotiations to continue without a strike, but was not willing to extend one union's contract while the other one went on strike.

"We've been through this with them before," Chernoff said. "Yale isn't serious about settling. It's not about a lack of time, it's about their lack of will to settle. They want to make the workers feel that they can't win."

The school wants to implement massive subcontracting, a two-tier wage system and lower health benefits for future retirees. But Chernoff said the workers' main concern is job security.

"People don't go on strike for a quarter-an-hour raise," Chernoff said in an interview. "They feel their livelihood is being threatened."

Local 35 will make weekly donations to Local 34. The unions also will be working with various community organizations on fundraising events.

This is the second time in less than a month that the university has been the scene of a labor dispute. About 75 members of the Graduate Employees and Student Organization went on a "grade strike" in January in an effort to receive lower health insurance costs, higher teaching stipends, smaller classes, more training and a formal grievance procedure.

The university said that the teaching assistants, who were trying to organize under HERE, were students and not employees, and thus not entitled to bargain collectively.

When they returned from winter break, many of them had lost their jobs. "Yale behaved like any union-busting corporation, using illegitimate tactics to crush dissent," Diana Paton told The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Graduate assistants increasingly have sought to unionize at large and small campuses over the past decade. In 1993, the Communications Workers organized 4,000 graduate teaching assistants at campuses of the State University of New York. At the University of California at Berkeley, graduate teaching assistants, members of UAW Local 2165, were on the picket line for more than two months in 1993.

New York City workers win job security in new contract

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Some 125,000 members of AFSCME District Council 37 didn't let New York City's financial straitjacket keep them from winning job security provisions in a new five-year contract.

Forgoing wage increases for two years in exchange for keeping their jobs, the workers voted 19,513-14,438, or 57 percent, in favor of the new contract.

"This vote shows that a majority of our members realized that in today's economy, job security is crucial," said AFSCME District Council 37 President Stanley Hill. "If you don't have a job, nothing else matters. The key issue in the outcome of this vote was job security."

The 60-month agreement contains strong layoff protection through June 30, 1998. In an important breakthrough, provisional and part-time city employees are, for the first time, protected from layoffs, according to the job security language of the contract.

Wage rates of municipal workers covered by the pact will increase 11.13 percent after a 24-month freeze.

Also included was an annuity cash payment of $2 per day, earned during the 15th month through the 26th month of the contract. The annuity cash payment is payable in the 51st month of the contract.

An additional 1.52 percent, based on the Dec. 31, 1994, payroll, will be available to individual bargaining units on the first day of the 60th month of the contract for such additional compensation as step plans, assignment differentials and longevity increases, or to lock in annuity.

Contributions to the welfare fund will increase by $75 in the 36th month of the contract and again by $75 in the 51st month of the contract. With the benefit and wage increases combined, increases in the contract come to 13.3 percent over the life of the contract.

Workers at municipal hospitals represented by Local 420 did not ratify the contract because it excluded them from the job security pledge in the face of federal health funding cuts and a city privatization plan.

However, Hill assured the local that the city promised that layoffs would be a "last resort" after all other means of retention have been exhausted, including retraining, redeployment, severance and early retirement. City Housing Authority workers also were left out of the no-layoff pledge because of the city's concerns over federal funding.

There were 15 other unions participating with AFSCME DC 37 in the 200,000-member Municipal Bargaining Coalition. One of DC 37's largest partners, Teamsters Local 237, has not completed voting on a contract.

Meanwhile, the 90,000-member United Federation of Teachers rejected their contract with the city after Mayor Giuliani announced pay raises for himself and other city officials and asked the unions to take a two-year wage freeze. Other contracts pending include the police, fire fighters and sanitation workers.

BARGAINING

Workers ratify Corning pact

Workers approved separate contracts for two Corning Inc. facilities that raise wages and improve medical benefits.

The new three-year agreements cover 3,000 members of the Flint Glass Workers at the plant in Corning, N.Y., and 300 members of the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers at Charleroi, Pa. The two agreements are nearly identical, company officials said.

The New York agreement calls for a wage increase of 4 percent retroactive to Dec. 4, 1995 followed by increases of 3 percent in each of 1997 and 1998.

In health care, the formula for determining employee contributions under Corning's self-insured plan did not change, but improvements were made in hospitalization and surgical coverage, disability benefits and the immunization program.

IAM, McDonnell Douglas agree

The Machinists, who have been working without a contract for more than three months, ratified a new contract with McDonnell Douglas Aircraft.

The new four-year agreement, which covers 1,850 workers in Southern California, includes a 2.5 percent wage increase retroactive to Oct. 23, 1995, when the old contract expired. The workers will receive a 2 percent raise in the second year and lump-sum payments equal to 2.5 percent and 3 percent, respectively, in the third and fourth years.

The pact also calls for no caps on cost-of-living adjustments, increased pension contributions and a ban on subcontracting of union work, the IAM said.

More jobs in GM accord

A tentative agreement between the UAW and General Motors Corp. will create 300 more jobs at a parts plant in Livonia, Mich. The union had pushed for more workers to help keep pace with increased work levels and to prevent contracting out.

The agreement, reached Jan. 25, headed off a threatened strike by the 1,100 workers.

The tentative pact would allow "joint efforts to increase competitiveness" at the Delphi Interior & Lighting Systems plant, one of several components GM says are unprofitable.

The agreement also settles several health and safety issues, the union said.

Partnership in steel pact

Members of the Steelworkers at Lukens Steel overwhelmingly approved a new four-year contract that provides a strong job security plan and raises wages, benefits and profit-sharing.

The agreement includes a new partnership arrangement that "recognizes the talents of our members by giving them a say in the company's decision-making process, from the shop floor to the executive offices," said Andrew V. Palm, chair of the union negotiating committee.

The contract also includes guaranteed job security for the term and bans contracting out union work. The USWA represents 1,150 employees at Lukens' Coatsville, Pa., plant.

The workers will receive a $3,000 ratification bonus, followed by 2 percent wage increases in both 1997 and 1998. The profit-sharing pool will be increased along with the amount distributed to each worker.

UNITE ratifies first BTR deal

Members of UNITE ratified their first contract with BTR Sealing Systems in Reidsville, N.C. — a three-year agreement that raises wages $1.20 per hour over term.

"Nine long months of negotiations have paid off in a contract which includes . . . raises, strong seniority language and a long list of other benefits and guarantees," said Phil Cohen, manager of UNITE's Central N.C. District. "Life for workers at BTR is going to be a much better experience."

Workers received an immediate 50-cents-an-hour raise, which will be followed by a 40-cent raise in 1997 and a 30-cent raise in 1998. Prior to the contract, the salary range for manufacturing employees was $7.00-$7.95 per hour and $8.75-$9.55 for leaders.

Under the agreement, workers will receive pension benefits for the first time, along with increased time off, triple pay for work on paid holidays, life insurance coverage and disability pay.

UNITE represents 525 employees at the company.

AFA wins contract at United

By David Kameras

Flight Attendants have reached a tentative four-year agreement with United Airlines that puts a halt to the establishment of international bases.

In addition to blocking the opening of additional bases, a longstanding area of contention, the union secured caps on the growth of existing overseas operations.

In a memo to AFA members, Master Executive Council President Kevin Lum indicated that the negotiation process had been a difficult one. "While in all honesty, it is not all we had hoped to achieve," the agreement "does address your core concerns. We have gained major improvements in job security, and all of our work rules, pay, vacation and benefits have been preserved," he said.

The foreign-base issue had been a particularly difficult sticking point in the negotiations, and was a major contributor to AFA's refusal to join other unions in the 1994 employee buyout that gave workers a majority stake in the carrier. Airport rallies were held to draw attention to the potential loss of U.S. jobs, most recently with the July 1, 1995, opening of a base in Hong Kong.

Among its other provisions, the agreement ensures U.S. attendants access to global operations; increases the number of language-qualified positions that may be assigned to flights and eliminates language-qualified lists; gives attendants parity with pilots on layover hotels; provides options for increasing flight time maximums; provides for arbitration of pay and per diem increases in 1988 and 1999; and improves schedule flexibility.

Ballot returns on the agreement, which was the product of an expedited mediation process, won't be available until sometime in April.

In another development, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission supported the AFA's contention that United's weight policy discriminated on the basis of age and sex.

The ruling stemmed from charges filed by the Flight Attendants in March 1993 arguing that the policy favored weight over health or ability, and held workers to an unfair and unrealistic standard. Although the carrier scrapped its policy in July 1994, AFA has intervened in a class action lawsuit seeking damages for affected flight attendants, and has fought similar policies at other airlines.

The decision "lends credence to our efforts to take the airlines' appearance standards out of the flight attendants' workplace," said AFA President Patricia Friend. "Flight attendants, as safety professionals, should be judged on the performance of their duties and not on someone's perception of what a flight attendant should look like."

In other airline developments:

- AFA has amended its lawsuit against ValuJet Airlines, adding four new plaintiffs to its brief and new charges of violations by management of the Railway Labor Act.

According to the charges, ValuJet President Lewis Jordan threatened to discipline one of the plaintiffs if she continued to wear a T-shirt displaying her support for the union. In a separate incident, AFA's local president was placed on a six-month "agreement to correct" after receiving a letter reprimanding her for describing working conditions to Jordan. During the agreement period, any additional "infractions" would lead to her termination.

"ValuJet management is conducting business as a kangaroo court, summarily meting out judgment on what is legal or illegal according to their own set of rules," Friend said. "This type of justice doesn't belong in a schoolyard, much less the workplace."

The union is seeking a permanent injunction to force reinstatement of fired workers with full benefits.

- Officials of unions that represent most U.S. airline pilots and flight engineers meeting at Teamsters headquarters in Washington Feb. 9-10 called on the Federal Aviation Administration to issue new rules to increase flight safety and prevent crew fatigue.

Persistence pays for building workers

Labor solidarity helps overcome rich owners

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Labor solidarity and perseverance through sub-zero-degree picket duty overcame the greed of wealthy building owners for more than 35,000 members of Service Employees Local 32B-32J, who won a new contract after a 30-day strike.

"The strikers are to be congratulated for a solid contract, achieved after great sacrifice," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney during a Feb. 5 press conference at the local union office. "They won because they stuck together in the face of concession demands from some of the most powerful real estate interests in the country."

Sweeney credited members of other unions in the city who decided to risk their own jobs by honoring the picket line. "It sends a message to the nation that we are entering a time of renewed solidarity among working Americans," said Sweeney, who was once president of the local.

The striking workers included porters, handymen, elevator operators and janitors who work in some of New York City's most prominent buildings — including Rockefeller Center, the Empire State Building and the World Trade Center. They went back to work Feb. 5 after five days of virtually round-the-clock bargaining.

A previous session was held Jan. 19 but ended after only 13 hours of talks.

"The result of this strike is a great contract," said SEIU Local 32B-32J President Gus Bevona. "The new contract provides wage increases greater than the national average."

The contract between the union and the Realty Advisory Board, which represents building owners and managers of more than 1,000 commercial buildings in the city, includes wage increases totaling 2.6 percent in the first year, 2.55 percent in the second, and 2.69 percent in the third year. Early in the strike, which began Jan. 4, management offered annual wage increases of 2 percent.

The increases translate into $15 a week in each of the contract's first two years and $16 a week in the third, which will bring the salary of a porter or cleaning person to $619 per week in the contract's third year.

The biggest obstacle to a settlement was management's demand to cut wages and benefits. The building owners had proposed a starting salary of $18,000, or $352 a week, down from the $29,000, or $573, they received under the old contract. It would have taken the new workers six years to receive the same salaries as experienced workers.

A lower starting salary would prompt building owners and management companies to get rid of experienced maintenance workers and replace them with cheaper new employees, the union said.

The new contract calls for a starting wage equal to 80 percent of the full scale for current workers. Wages for new employees will start at $470.40 a week, then rise to the full scale in one step after they are on the job 30 months.

Galvanized by management's use of some 15,000 replacement workers, building trades unions joined the local in stepping up pressure on management by honoring the picket line. The New York Building and Construction Trades Council, including the Carpenters, Painters, Electrical Workers and Operating Engineers, refused to do work at the six buildings with picket lines, with the threat to do likewise at many other buildings.

The local had appealed to all union members to honor the picket line in a full-page advertisement in the Feb. 4 edition of the New York Times.

The union has brought building workers a long way since the early 1900s, when apartment houses would hire janitors and their wives in a two-for-one deal, paying the couples $20 to $50 a week and often giving them a basement room next to a coal chute.

Other terms of the contract include an immediate increase in major medical insurance to 85 percent, up from 80 percent, and a pension increase for retirees, from $650 to $800 a month, followed by a raise to $850 a month in the third year.

The employers will not make pension or annuity contributions for new employees for 24 months or health insurance contributions for three months. Temporary workers, who replace regular workers while on vacation, will be paid 60 percent of the full wage rate.

Workers with 20 or more years on the job will get one day a year to a maximum of 25 vacation days, compared with 20 days after 20 years under the previous contract.

Detroit strikers' good news is in the mail

Alternative weekly puts pressure on scab papers

By David Kameras

Having solidified community support for the strike against the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News, unionists are taking their case from coast to coast with a mail subscription to their own alternative newspaper, The Detroit Sunday Journal.

The Sunday Journal, now circulating to 300,000 people in the metropolitan Detroit area, is part of an advertising crunch being brought to bear on the scab Free Press and News.

The Oakland (Mich.) Press, a suburban paper, is enticing advertisers with claims that the market penetration of the anti-union papers has dropped from 60 percent to 44 percent, while theirs has risen from 39 percent to 47 percent. Another suburban paper, the Macomb Daily, garnered a shift in business by an insert company, resulting in a $400,000 loss of revenue for the Detroit papers.

The Sunday Journal, which has been soliciting advertising from unions and other progressive organizations around the country, now is offering mail subscribers the opportunity to send "a message to the strikers that they are not alone in their battle to keep Gannett and Knight-Ridder from busting their unions," said Communications Workers President Morton Bahr.

Added Linda Foley, president of CWA's Newspaper Guild, "By helping the strike effort, you bolster the workers' confidence that they can last one day longer than their employers and raise their hopes of obtaining a fair contract."

The initial response "has been absolutely tremendous," said co-editor Susan Watson. "We've already had orders from both coasts and just about every place in-between"

Community support has come from numerous quarters. More than 200 clergy in the Detroit area issued a renewed call to their neighbors to boycott the News and the Free Press.

Permanently replacing striking workers "is morally objectionable and a breach of the ethical teachings of our faith traditions," the religious leaders said.

"It's unfair and unjust," added Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, "for the management of Detroit newspapers to hold an entire community hostage simply to defend a practice that is both morally objectionable and destructive of the social and economic relationships required to build healthy and stable communities."

UAW locals in Michigan also have been adopting auto dealerships targeted for leafleting because of their continued advertising in the scab papers. So far, more than 100 dealerships have pulled their ads, including three of the papers' top 10 advertisers, thanks largely to UAW pressure.

Unionists nationwide observed Feb. 8 as "Knight-Ridder Day" by leafleting more than 30 of the chain's newspapers across the country in an effort coordinated by members of the IBT, CWA, Graphic Communications Union, TNG and Jobs with Justice.

"Knight-Ridder has admitted losing $46 million so far as a result of this strike," said Al Derey, head of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions. "We want people at other Knight-Ridder papers to be aware of this situation, and to realize that will affect them as well."

Meanwhile, a decision by the National Labor Relations Board to set aside a non-violence agreement governing striking workers at the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press was characterized as "unfair and unfounded" by Derey.

"All of the people injured due to picket-line violence during this strike have been union members," he said. "It's our members who have been beaten, tear-gassed, run over by company vehicles and thrown on the ground by company security guards."

"We look forward to our day in court," Derey said.

For a three-month subscription to the Sunday Journal, send a check for $15 or VISA or MasterCard number and expiration date with name, address and telephone number to The Detroit Sunday Journal, Attention: Subscriptions, 3100 E. Jefferson, Detroit, Mich. 48207.



HERE photo

Workers stand in front of a 20-foot-high "Wall of Shame" that documents the record of Kajima Corp., owner of the New Otani Hotel and Garden, as a boycott was launched against the Los Angeles hotel.

HERE launches L.A. hotel boycott

Community supporters hit Otani anti-unionism

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

More than 500 union members and community supporters kicked off a consumer boycott of the New Otani Hotel and Garden Jan. 24 with a rally and cries of "Boycott! Boycott!" that saw several nonplussed hotel guests hesitating to enter the hotel.

The Los Angeles hotel refuses to negotiate with Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 11, and has created a "climate of intimidation" among its mostly women and immigrant work force that makes a free election nearly impossible, the union said.

"People of conscience must not support an employer that disrespects women and minority workers, and fails to provide family health insurance that workers can reasonably afford," Local 11 President Maria Elena Durazo said during a press conference prior to the picketing. "Don't eat, sleep or meet at the New Otani Hotel."

An entire department of more than 20 workers was fired without notice last June, and their jobs were contracted out to companies paying even less than the New Otani. Management also fired three housekeeping workers with 16 years of service each in what the union believes was retaliation for their outspoken support the union.

Unfair labor practice charges are pending with the National Labor Relations Board.

HERE Local 11 has won support from unions, local politicians, congressional representatives, religious leaders and the international community — including the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel and Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations, an international trade secretariat that includes 312 trade unions in 110 countries and represents a combined membership of 2.6 million workers.

Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas had scheduled a fundraiser at the hotel but declared, "As of now, that reservation is canceled." The president of the Japanese-American Bar Association, Mike Yamamoto, said the group's annual inauguration dinner, which has been held at the hotel for years, would be moved to another hotel this year.

Workers unveiled a 20-foot-high "Wall of Shame" depicting the controversial history of the hotel and the shameful record of the Kajima Corp., the hotel's controlling owner. In the style of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, it lists the names of hundreds of people affected by the New Otani and Kajima from 1945 to the present.

The union also has dispatched a delegation to Japan to enlist support for the workers.

"The New Otani is nonunion and will continue to be the site of regular picketing," declared Durazo, whose union is known for its use of street theater, civil disobedience and other high-profile tactics.

This is the first time in more than four years that a major hotel in downtown Los Angeles has been the target of a boycott. The last one was the Hyatt Regency Hotel, which settled a protracted contract dispute with Local 11 in 1991, ending a punishing 14-month boycott.

Company union cited at janitorial firm

The National Labor Relations Board sided with Service Employees Local 1877 in ruling that Somers Building Maintenance Inc. unlawfully encouraged its workers to join an in-house company union.

"Somers and Hewlett-Packard have repeatedly insisted on Local 1's legitimacy and their respect for the workers' decision to choose Local 1 over SEIU. This decision clearly shows that Somers won't let the workers choose a real union," said SEIU Local 1877 President Mike Garcia.

The Feb. 1 complaint consolidates a number of unfair labor practice charges against the Sacramento cleaning company by Local 1877's Justice for Janitors campaign, which has been trying to organize the company for more than a year. Somers cleans Hewlett-Packard's office buildings and other major buildings in Northern California. In a 10-page order, NLRB Director of Region 20 Robert H. Miller said that Somers had rendered unlawful assistance and support to Local 1, a union formed by management to thwart SEIU Local 1877's Justice for Janitors campaign.

The complaint also alleges a Somers supervisor "created an impression among employees that their activities on behalf of Local 1877 were under surveillance" and told employees other workers would solicit signatures for a union other than Local 1877.

In August 1995, Somers recognized Local 1 as the exclusive collective bargaining representative "even though (Local 1) did not represent an uncoerced majority of the unit," according to the complaint.

The company-dominated union contract provides no raises and takes away more rights than it grants, the union said. The complaint demands that Somers remove Local 1, invalidate the contract and refund the workers' union dues.

The company tried to settle the charge rather than face litigation, but the NLRB rejected their proposals and is moving ahead to prosecute. A hearing on the consolidated complaint is scheduled for May 13 in Sacramento before an NLRB administrative law judge.

"We will not give up until janitors in Sacramento win justice and an end to this type of illegal pressure from their employers," Garcia added.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

Small return for hard work

Workers' real earnings continue long-term slide

Continued from Page 1

Republicans in Congress to scuttle efforts to even modestly increase the bench mark rate.

The numbers underscored the concern shown in a new poll conducted for the Philadelphia Inquirer, which found that 49 percent of middle-class families and 50 percent of families with children believe they are worse off than they were 10 years ago.

The survey, which has a 3 percent margin of error, discovered that discontent was rooted in bread-and-butter issues. Sixty-six percent of respondents worried about having enough money for retirement, 57 percent with the ability to pay medical bills, 46 percent with being able to care for an aging relative, 44 percent with financing children's education and 34 percent with a major wage-earner losing a job. Income differences edged out race as the leading cause of division in America.

The continuing wave of corporate downsizing added to workers' anxieties about the future. Consultant John A. Challenger reported that January represented the biggest spike in layoffs in two years, with a loss of 97,379 jobs.

And making matters worse was the partial federal government shutdown, which put on ice 500 sets of contract negotiations and created a backlog of 5,000 arbitration requests, according to John Calhoun Wells, director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. Among those affected were 30,000 SEIU members striking commercial building owners in New York City.

Even without the 40,000-job cut at AT&T, which led the pack of layoffs, the blow to employment opportunities was enormous.

- Unisys is discarding 7,900 of its workers, 21 percent, over the next year.
- Other computer industry layoffs were announced at Quantum Corp. (2,250) and Apple Computer Inc. (1,300).
- Anheuser-Busch has grown stale on its Eagle Snacks subsidiary and is cashing in its chips at a cost of 1,750 jobs.
- More than 100 workers lost their jobs when Ozark-Mahoning Mining Co. closed two southern Illinois fluorspar mines, choosing instead to import the state's official mineral from China.
- Domino Sugar is using 450 workers as pawns and threatening to shut down a refinery in Williamsburg, N.Y., in an effort to influence Congress on farm policy.

The continued barrage of layoffs means decreased leverage for workers when they sit down at the bargaining table.

"As the labor market weakens, the opportunity for workers to get wage gains is going to dwindle rapidly," economist Dean Baker of the Economic Policy Institute told the Los Angeles Times.

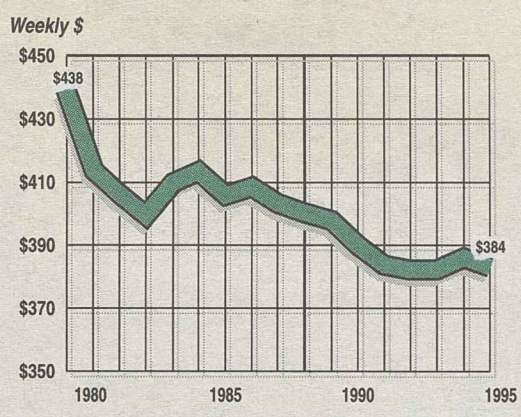
After a three-year hiatus, the BLS issued a report on mass layoffs, those involving 50 or more employees out of work for at least 31 days, indicating that 300,280 workers lost their jobs through 1,412 layoffs in the second quarter of 1995.

About one-third of the losses occurred in manufacturing, especially in such nondurable goods as food processing and apparel.

Four states represented 47 percent of the jobs lost: Florida (51,384), California (37,448), Texas (27,438) and Pennsylvania (23,846).

Weekly earnings drop 1979-1995

Private nonfarm production/nonsupervisory workers (in 1994 dollars)



Real Earnings	
December '95	-0.2 percent
Dec. '94-Dec. '95	-0.3 percent
Since Dec. '79	-10.3 percent

Merchandise Trade Deficit	
November	$13.3 billion
October	$16.2 billion

AFL-CIO NEWSGRAFIC

Bargaining gains offset by uncertainty

Collective bargaining agreements continue to lag behind the advancing U.S. productivity rate, although many of the contracts announced in January are outpacing the annual inflation rate.

Productivity in durable goods manufacturing took a huge jump of 6.6 percent in the third quarter of 1995, and 4.8 percent in factories making nondurables. But corporate management is not inclined to share its benefits with the workers who made it happen.

"It is clear that the American worker still is not sharing in the nation's productivity growth," said AFL-CIO economist John Zalusky. "And it is evident that the relative standard of living of the union member continues to decline.

"But the union member remains much better off than the unrepresented member," he added.

The average weekly earnings of union members in 1995 were $602, 35 percent more than their nonunion counterparts. For women, the difference was 37 percent.

Among the pay gainers scoring in January were the UAW at Boeing Helicopter, the Communications Workers at Bell Atlantic, Flint Glass Workers at Corning Glass, the Machinists at Pratt and Whitney, UNITE at BTR Sealing Systems, the Postal Workers at U.S. Postal Service, the Service Employees at City of San Francisco, the AFT at the Toledo, Ohio, School District and the Television and Radio Artists at The Nashville Network.

Outraged by the stagnant wages North American workers receive while their corporate employers attain enormous wealth, the Steelworkers adopted a wage policy statement establishing a series of goals intended to restore economic leverage during upcoming collective bargaining.

"America needs a raise," declared USWA President George Becker, echoing the frequently voiced assertion of AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney that the gap between workers and the rich is growing ever wider.

"We have witnessed in recent years a massive redistribution of wealth away from workers and the middle class," he said. "Corporate profits since 1992 have increased 43 percent, an annual rate of $581 billion. Yet this enormous wealth is not being shared with the average American worker.

"Many corporations are downsizing while reporting record profits," Becker said. "At the same time, wages for workers are falling. This wage policy statement will serve as a valuable springboard for upcoming Steelworker negotiations."

Among the union's stated objectives were contract provisions for better wages, job security, increased worker training, the right to organize non-union shops through card-check recognition, safety and health, ending two-tier wage structures, eliminating pervasive use of contingency workers, reducing excessive overtime, promoting increased hiring, improved benefits for retirees and fairness in the workplace.

"Tens of thousands of the finest jobs in industry have either been lost or threatened because of serious competitive disadvantages," the USWA said. "We intend to continue to press the Clinton administration to change these ruinous policies, and we call upon employers to join with us in this effort."

— David Kameras

Trade deficit still moving on track for record red ink

By David Kameras

The U.S. merchandise trade deficit improved in November, moving from $16.2 billion to $13.3 billion. But it wasn't enough to derail it from an inevitable train wreck for the year.

For the year to date, the deficit in goods was $151.4 billion, up from $140.1 billion in the previous record year of 1994.

"Although the weakening U.S. economy produced a November drop in imports, the cumulative trade imbalance through November points to another year of record trade deficits for 1995," said AFL-CIO economist Greg Woodhead.

"U.S. government policy must bring order and balance to America's international relationships," Woodhead said. "Diligent monitoring and aggressive enforcement of all U.S. trade agreements by the USTR are critical steps in the right direction."

U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor recently announced he is setting up a permanent trade office tasked with monitoring foreign governments and boosting their compliance with trade statutes.

The deficit with Mexico for the first 11 months of the year was $14.4 billion, continuing a downward slide and contrasting sharply with a *surplus* of $1.4 billion during the same period of 1994. For the first 10 months, agricultural imports from Mexico, excluding gains, were up 42 percent to $2.9 billion, while exports fell 44 percent to $724 million.

As for our neighbor to the north, the deficit reached $16.3 billion, up about a third from 1994's $12.4 billion. While autos and auto parts continue to be a big part of the gap, lumber imports topped $5.6 billion, 36 percent of the U.S. market. Over the past four years, nearly 30,000 U.S. lumber mill jobs have been lost, due in large part to Canadian timber grown on government-owned lands and sold by provincial governments at prices below open-market bids.

The trade deficit in goods with the Pacific Rim improved in November, with China's narrowing from $3.6 billion to $2.8 billion, while Japan, which has begun incrementally loosening its restrictions on imported autos and auto parts at the insistence of American labor unions and the Clinton administration, saw its trade gap lessen from $4.9 billion to $4.1 billion.

"The fact is that Japan has benefited more than any other country in the world from open markets and free trade and multilateral agreements," said Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. "Yet Japan continues to have the most closed market of any industrial nation. That has to change, and it is changing little by little."

Nonetheless, the improvement in trade with Asia is a mild wave, not a tsunami. China, Japan and Taiwan accounted for a merchandise trade deficit of $96.6 billion from January to November, 64 percent of the total.

Meanwhile, multinationals continue to pour their capital into the Pacific Rim. According to China's minister of foreign trade and economic cooperation, foreign investment there reached $38 billion last year, up 11.6 percent from 1994. The world's most populous country is host to 120,000 enterprises built with overseas funding, employing 16 million people. And Ford Motor Co., which already has plants in China, India and Malaysia, will invest $53 million in two automotive component factories in Thailand.

Not all the heavy investment is coming from the West. South Korea, the largest Asian investor in Mexico's manufacturing sector, sent $390 million there last year alone.

Merchandise trade with Germany worsened considerably in November, moving from $883 million to $1.3 billion. The 11-month deficit was $13.1 billion, as opposed to $11.4 billion in 1994.

The January-November goods deficit was led by cars and trucks ($50.7 billion), followed by clothing and footwear $41.8 billion), data processing and office equipment ($24.3 billion), electrical machinery ($20.3 billion), telecommunications equipment ($14.7 billion), toys and sporting goods ($8.8 billion), iron and steel products ($6.6 billion) and furniture ($4.8 billion).

School privatization experiment fails in two cities

By Colleen M. O'Neill

School privatization experiments have gone bust in several major cities as officials realized the company promised the moon and delivered nothing.

"Teachers are being blamed for Education Alternative Inc.'s failure (in Hartford, Conn., and Baltimore)," said AFT President Albert Shanker, "but the fact is that EAI has caused its own troubles. They overpromised; they didn't deliver on their promises; and they made clear over time that money was their main interest, not improved student learning."

Baltimore officials canceled their five-year, $180 million contract with EAI last November — with 18 months remaining — after allegations of inflated student counts (which would bring the company more money) and little change in test scores despite greater-than-average financial contributions to the nine schools involved.

In fact, as The Baltimore Sun found in an investigation in early 1995, the company and its corporate partners cleaned up the schools and maintained them well, installed hundreds of computers and put two adults in every classroom — but amassed no significant improvement in students' test scores, while other city school experiments had tangible proof of their successes.

High spending levels — EAI received nearly $18 million, or 11 percent more, to manage the nine Baltimore schools than would have been budgeted without privatization — and the lack of noticeable improvement proved to be the company's undoing.

The arrangement also was clouded by an unusually close relationship between Baltimore City School Superintendent Dr. Walter G. Amprey and the company's chief, John T. Golle. In fact, it was Amprey's efforts that helped gain the company the contract to manage 35 schools in Hartford.

"If you heard the superintendent at a public meeting, you'd swear he was a salesman for EAI instead of the person who is supposed to be watching the store," Shanker told The Sun during EAI's Baltimore tenure.

Hartford officials were not as patient with the company as Baltimore officials were, moving toward termination a five-year pact in January after just 14 months. Shanker lauded the move and expressed hope that the board would join with Hartford's teachers in bringing about essential reforms.

"Hartford's teachers have joined with other teachers across the country in AFT's 'Responsibility, Respect, Results: Lessons for Life' campaign to make schools safe and orderly for learning and to set high academic standards for all students," he said.

The Hartford story began in March 1994, when EAI officials first approached the city school board. Despite warnings drawn from experiences with the company in Baltimore and Dade County, Fla. — where the union said the company clearly overpromised and underachieved — the Hartford school board signed a contract with EAI that November.

By mid-1995, it was clear the arrangement was failing, AFT officials said. The company, anticipating it would find much waste in the way the school system spent its $200 million annual budget, sunk $11 million into the schools and realized no return — and found nowhere to cut.

EAI cut its focus then to six schools from 35, but couldn't deliver on any of its promises, and by October 1995 — less than a year after the contract was signed — both sides entered a blame-game debate, with the contract ultimately on the skids by last month.

The Hartford school board has yet to take an official vote. However, the majority of the board has said it is not in favor of retaining the company's services.

Questions also remain regarding $11 million the company claims it is owed by the school system.

"This is truly privatization hell," said Leo Canty, executive vice president of the Connecticut AFT, which represents teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, hallway monitors and substitute teachers.

"This is the risk people take when they go into business with private companies," he said. Assets and services could be tied up for years.

Shanker highlighted the failings of privatization at the May 1995 Executive Council meeting.

These companies "start with zero . . . first wire the whole school and put computers in the classroom, then they paint the school," he said. "After that, it's all down hill."

"They increase class size and fire senior folks," he said, "and bring in new college graduates for little money. . . . Despite all this, test scores are going down."

"The company makes its payoff by taking it out of the hides of employees," Shanker said.

NEWSMAKERS

A bust of **A. Philip Randolph** now resides in the lobby at AFL-CIO headquarters along with those of other labor pioneers. APRI President **Norman Hill** presented the bust to AFL-CIO President **John J. Sweeney**, Secretary-Treasurer **Richard L. Trumka**, and Executive Vice President **Linda Chavez-Thompson** during a reception and screening of the documentary, "A. Philip Randolph: For Jobs and Freedom," which was shown on public television stations Feb. 2, during Black History Month.

Steelworkers President **George Becker** has named former Rubber Workers Organizational Director **John Sellers** executive vice president of the Rubber/Plastics Industry Conference, succeeding **Kenneth L. Coss**, who will retire effective March 1. Coss, 60, is the former URW president who helped lead the union to merge with USWA in July 1995. Sellers, 55, was appointed organizational director in 1992 and has worked as the bargaining coordinator for the Bridgestone/Firestone chain of USWA local unions.

Becker also announced that **Gary Hubbard** will become the USWA director for public affairs, moving from the Pittsburgh headquarters to Washington to lead strategic communications for the union. Replacing Hubbard as director of communications is **Charles Robideau**, who is editor of the SteelLabor.

President Clinton said he plans to nominate **Joaquin (Jack) F. Otero** to serve as the Labor Department's assistant secretary for international labor affairs. Otero is a former AFL-CIO vice president and vice president of the Transportation Communications Union before joining the Clinton administration in 1993 as deputy undersecretary for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs.

Donald Wasserman was sworn in as a new member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority. Before joining the FLRA, Wasserman served as director of research and collective bargaining for AFSCME since 1977. The FLRA is the independent agency that administers the labor-management relations program for more than 2.1 million employees worldwide.

President Clinton announced his plans to appoint **Richard G. Womack** to the board of directors of the Federal Prison Industries Corp. Womack is the director of the AFL-CIO Department of Civil Rights.

AWARDS

Vice President Gore and the National Partnership Council will salute labor-management teams with the first National Partnership Awards for improving customer service or saving tax dollars. Winners include AFGE's National Council of Field Labor Locals at the Labor Department and Service Employees Local 5000, the National Association of Government Employees, at the Red River Army Depot.

DEATHS

Marshall M. Hicks, former president of the Utility Workers, died Feb. 12 from cancer. He was 64.

Hicks began his career with the union in 1952 in Erie, Mich. He rose through the ranks and was elected secretary-treasurer of the union in 1971. He was elected president in 1991 and re-elected in 1995.

Hicks sought to preserve U.S. jobs by opposing the importation of Canadian power, and later led the fight against deregulation in the electric industry, pointing to damages caused by hasty deregulation of the airline, trucking and communications industries.

"Marshall was a tireless worker, putting in many more hours than people knew," said Donald E. Wightman, who was elected president of the union last month when Hicks retired because of his health. "He was always available to take phone calls, help with stalled negotiations or arbitration. He was a hands-on president and will be missed very much."

Hicks is survived by his wife, four children and four grandchildren.

Ray Andrus, retired staff representative in the AFL-CIO Department of Community Services, died after a brief illness in Texas. He was 75.

Andrus was a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 4-23 for more than 50 years. He joined the AFL-CIO COPE department in 1959 and moved to the Community Service Department in 1964. Over the years he worked on a range of programs, from substance abuse to strike assistance.

After retiring in 1991, Andrus organized a retiree council for the Sabine Area AFL-CIO in Port Arthur, Texas. He is survived by his wife.

Thomas Everett Harris, a veteran labor lawyer who was one of the original members of the Federal Election Commission, died Feb. 6 from brain injuries caused by a fall. He was 83.

Harris served as a Democrat on the bipartisan election from 1975 until he retired in 1986. The commission has exclusive jurisdiction over monitoring and enforcing campaign finance activities.

When Harris was nominated for the commission, he was an associate general counsel of the AFL-CIO. Harris began his labor law career in 1948 when he was appointed assistant counsel for the CIO by Arthur J. Goldberg before the merger with the AFL.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and two grandchildren.

CORRECTION

John K. Grelle, newly appointed senior vice president and chief financial officer for ULLICO, most recently worked in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., as managing director of DCG Corporation/DeHayes Consulting Group, a financial services consulting firm based in Sacramento, Calif.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper

Court vindicates Farm Workers on lettuce boycott

Union sheds burden of $3.7 million award

An Arizona court of appeals handed the Farm Workers a Valentine's Day victory — absolution from a $3.7 million judgment against the union.

The court decision "is a triumph for the United Farm Workers and a vindication of Cesar Chavez," said UFW President Arturo Rodriguez.

UFW founder Chavez died in his sleep after a day giving testimony during the second trial in April 1993, and union supporters held a 24-hour vigil at the courthouse in his honor.

"Cesar gave his last ounce of strength defending the farm workers in this case," he said, "standing up for their First Amendment right to speak out for themselves. He believed in his heart that the farm workers were right in boycotting Bruce Church Inc. lettuce during the 1980s and he was determined to prove that in court."

The appeals court found the trial judge in Yuma had given the jury incorrect instructions, preferential to the company. There would be a third trial if Bruce Church presses the case.

The award stemmed from a ruling in favor of lettuce grower Bruce Church Inc. in a dispute that goes back 17 years. The UFW launched a boycott in 1979 after it was unable to reach agreement on a labor contract with the company, asking shoppers not to patronize California supermarkets that sold the company's lettuce.

Some 10 grocery chains quit buying the lettuce, and the company sued in neighboring Arizona, which is less union-friendly than California.

In 1988, Bruce Church won $5.4 million based on Arizona law banning secondary boycotts. That award was thrown out on appeal, with the court saying the action had occurred in California, not Arizona.

However, the jury found by a vote of 9 to 3 that the UFW had engaged in outrageous conduct during the boycott and awarded the company $2.9 million. The award had grown, with interest, to $3.7 million.

The AFL-CIO and several affiliated unions — including AFSCME, Communications Workers, Electrical Workers, Machinists, Mine Workers, Service Employees, UAW and UNITE — had pledged to cover the judgment in the event the union lost the appeal.



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Two young brothers, Matthew, 12, and Daniel Messick, 8, are among more than 200 unionists who rallied Feb. 5 at the Oklahoma state capitol against right-to-work legislation. The rally was sponsored by the Working Families Coalition of Oklahoma, which has mounted an advertising campaign.

Oklahomans fight 'right to work'

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

As Oklahoma's state legislators filed into the state capitol to begin their first session, hundreds of Oklahomans rallied in front of the building with a message: "Right to work is wrong."

Oklahoma is one of two states — Oregon is the other — where the anti-union forces of the National Right To Work Committee are concentrating their efforts this year.

"Governor Keating should stop the anti-worker, anti-family and anti-people rhetoric," Oklahoma AFL-CIO President Ross Williams told the crowd. "Quit responding to real issues with right-wing babble that is meaningless and discrediting. We don't need right to work."

The rally was sponsored by the Working Families Coalition of Oklahoma, led by the state federation. The coalition, a broad-based group that includes unions, community, religious and minority organizations statewide, also supports better programs for children, increased support for elementary, secondary and higher education and a long-overdue pay raise for state employees.

In less than two months, the coalition has implemented a public information campaign that includes television, radio and newspaper ads. The newspaper ads, which ran in the Daily Oklahoman and the Tulsa World, state that "Frank Keating's Vision for Oklahoma Is a Nightmare That Must Be Stopped."

Other coalition activities will include phone banks, education drives to inform union members and postcards to state legislators.

"It is going to take the commitment and solidarity of the entire labor movement to fight right to work in that state," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told Williams and other state union leaders in a meeting at the federation's headquarters.

Keating is pushing the right-to-work plank even though results of a poll by Cole, Hargrave Snodgrass and Associates, a firm headed by a close advisor of the governor, indicated right to work is not considered a major issue by Oklahomans and lacks majority support statewide, Williams said.

> *"For (Gov.) Keating to keep beating the dead horse of right to work simply wastes valuable time and effort that could be spent on real attempts to create jobs."*
>
> **— Ross Williams**
> **Oklahoma AFL-CIO president**

"For Keating to keep beating the dead horse of right to work simply wastes valuable time and effort that could be spent on real attempts to create jobs," said Williams. "He should carry the responsibility for his failures on his shoulders, not try to put them on someone else's."

Last year, right-to-work legislation passed in the state House, but was stopped in a Senate committee. Seven bills already have been introduced this year.

Meanwhile, in Oregon, a special session of the legislature started Feb. 1 with a group of first-term Republicans announcing that right to work is on their agenda. On another track, petitioners for the National Right to Work Committee are paid $5 for each signature they get to place the issue on the November ballot.

The deadline for signatures is not until July 1996. Proponents are required to gain the number of signatures equal to 6 percent of the statewide vote in the last gubernatorial election.

Since this issue reappears year after year and does not appear to lose momentum, Oregon AFL-CIO President Irvin Fletcher noted, "the most important thing is for us to educate our members and the general public on what right to work really means."

Right-to-work legislation also has been carried over from the last legislature in Pennsylvania and may reappear in California, Colorado, Indiana, Montana and New Mexico, said Mike Gildea of the AFL-CIO Department of Field Services.

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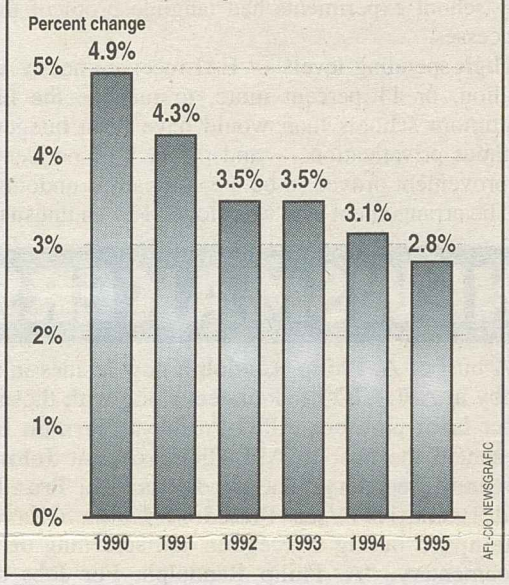
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UNION YES

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Unionists stand up for OSHA during the markup of a bill that would cripple the agency. **See story, Page 3.**

Council launches vigorous new agenda

By Michael Byrne
Bal Harbour, Fla.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council vowed to propel the labor movement forward, adopting a plan to lead unions in energetic organizing campaigns that will reverse the decades-long slide in membership.

At the same time, the federation committed millions of dollars and tens of thousands of people to the 1996 political campaign, with a plan to put worker issues squarely on the table. Labor will build a permanent network of grass-roots activists in every congressional district while it presents the public case for unions as the solution to the problems facing working families.

To help fund a $35 million political education campaign, the Executive Council authorized President John J. Sweeney to call a special convention March 25 to consider a one-year assessment on national unions of 15 cents per member per month. The council also earmarked $10 million for new organizing activity, including a fund to assist innovative new campaigns and a Union Summer project that will introduce young activists to unions. **(See stories, below).**

Future funding will be facilitated by a new contract for the Union Privilege MasterCard, which is expected to yield at least $375 million over five years to the federation and participating unions, beginning in February 1997, Sweeney told the council. **(See story, Page 7).**

The groundwork for the federation's political work will be laid this spring with a series of town hall meetings held in 29 cities to help define the essential political issue — how workers are struggling with inadequate wages and benefits while a corporate elite is reaping enormous profits from economic "strength." **(See story, Page 5).**

That public campaign to focus attention on the growing wage gap between rich and working families drew praise from several visitors, including Vice President Gore, who brought a promise from President Clinton to veto bills pending in the House and Senate that would undermine job safety. **(See story, Page 3).**

Gore predicted that the federation's new push to bring in more union members would lead to more legislation, policies and programs that help working men and women.

"That is why John Sweeney's vision is so important," Gore told reporters, "to organize those men and women who really want to bargain collectively and be a part of a movement that urges greater progress and justice in matters like job safety and health."

Sweeney also announced next steps in a major re-

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Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Monica Russo, UNITE's southern region organizing director, was among several organizers who gave the council "the view from the trenches." Also listening was House Minority Whip David E. Bonior (D-Mich.), who had asked to hear the report on organizing, "your most important campaign," he said.

Organizing program seeks innovation

By Muriel H. Cooper

The AFL-CIO Executive Council outlined a sweeping plan for the federation to lead unions to "Build Power for Workers by Organizing."

The plan includes guidelines for a new AFL-CIO fund to help support innovative, well-planned organizing projects, as well as a Union Summer program styled after the Freedom Summer civil rights campaign of the 1960s, with a thousand young unionists and students placed in key organizing drives. **(See story, Page 8).**

Additional funding also was earmarked for a new Organizing Department and the federation's highly successful Organizing Institute for training organizers, which becomes a part of the Organizing Department.

Organizing clearly is the No. 1 priority of the labor movement, said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, who devoted the first morning session of the council's winter meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla., to the new program and to hear "the view from the trenches" by organizers in the field.

"We must all face the facts," Sweeney told the council. "The crisis of a declining union movement is the crisis of workers in America, and all working families are affected."

Many unionized companies have moved offshore, turning vibrant communities into lifeless districts overflowing with poverty. New technologies have replaced the human touch, knocking thousands of workers off their feet. Governments have responded to cost pressures by "privatizing" jobs once held by union members.

"The numbers tell us why we need to change," Sweeney said, pointing to figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that show union membership declining by more than a quarter of a million in 1995, with union workers making up only 14.9 percent of the work force, and only 10.4 percent of the private sector.

"We have to devote considerably more resources to organizing — more resources at the AFL-CIO, more resources from our national unions and more resources from our local unions," he said.

The council budgeted $5 million immediately for the organizing fund and planned to boost that figure significantly in the years ahead as more innovative campaigns seek funding. The fund will "increase the

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Political plan raises issues, grass roots

Special convention will consider funding

By Michael Byrne
Bal Harbour, Fla.

The AFL-CIO launched its most ambitious political program ever, pledging $35 million for an issues-oriented campaign that will thrust working families into the 1996 political debate and build a permanent grass-roots structure to aggressively pursue worker issues between election cycles.

"We're going to mount a political effort of unprecedented scale, with every union doing its share by contributing ideas, money, staff, media and materials," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told reporters.

"While implementation of our plan will benefit candidates who stand with working families, that is not our primary goal," he said. "Rather, we will build a base of working people who hold elected officials accountable, regardless of party, and who will inject workers' rights and values into our national debate."

The program will be presented and discussed March 25 at a special convention in Washington, where delegates will consider a one-year assessment on national unions of 15 cents per member per month to help fund the massive grass-roots activity. The convention also will decide whether to endorse President Clinton and Vice President Gore for re-election.

The special assessment would raise close to $25 million, AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee, chair of the Political Education Committee, explained to reporters. The federation and its largest unions would come up with additional money to reach the $35 million goal, he said.

The lion's share of the $35 million would go toward television and radio advertisements that will help define major issues while also promoting unions as the solution to workers' problems.

In addition, a national labor political training center is being established to train some 3,000 staff and union volunteers in message and legislative and political

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ORGANIZING

Teamsters on a roll

The Teamsters are working to turn around labor's loss of membership, reporting that IBT membership rose last year by several thousand. IBT President Ron Carey credits a $25 million, four-year organizing program that most recently netted additional wins at Overnite Transportation and Great Lakes Aviation.

Despite heavy company attempts at intimidation — including a firing that the union alleges was unlawful — 48 percent of Overnite drivers in Cincinnati voted for Teamsters representation. "Overnite just can't seem to stop breaking the law," Carey said. "But the Teamsters will stand by the Overnite workers until they win justice and a fair contract."

Overnite workers are engaged in one of the largest private-sector organizing campaigns in more than a decade. Workers have voted for the union in more than 17 terminals, representing about 1,500 employees.

Meanwhile, pilots at Great Lakes Aviation Inc. voted for IBT representation. The company is a United Airlines Express carrier.

More power through UWUA

By a vote of 176-98, the production and maintenance workers at the Gavin Power Plant in Cheshire, Ohio, voted for representation by the Utility Workers.

"This vote represents a clear statement that workers are concerned about job security," said James Keller, a UWUA vice president who headed the organizing drive. "In today's changing utility environment of downsizing, outsourcing and restructuring, workers need a union capable of bringing a sense of stability to a chaotic industry."

UWUA President Donald E. Wightman said he expected cooperation in bargaining with American Electric Power, the parent company that also operates other UWUA-represented sites.

Thanks, Mayor Riordan

Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan unknowingly played "lead organizer" in getting 700 city supervisors and superintendents to vote for representation by the Laborers.

The mayor tried to contract out parking enforcement, refuse collection and the city's port. "It's not only the rank and file that lose their jobs, but their supervisors as well, with privatization," said Mason M. Warren, LIUNA's organizing director.

The workers are members of the bargaining unit of the city's Supervisors and Superintendents Association, representing blue-collar supervisors, with most having worked their way up through the ranks and having many years of service with the city.

IATSE rocks 'n' rolls

Workers can dance in the streets of Cleveland, thanks to a cooperative relationship with the management of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. The Theatrical Stage Employees recently signed an agreement to represent about 40 workers in visitor service, security and audio-visual.

"We are delighted to enlist in a partnership with labor, who has already done so much to support the museum," said William H. Hulett, museum board co-chair and CEO. "The appeal of the relationship was forged through the construction of the building and now extends into our operation."

Oregon unionists in ballot battles

Pension attack follows 'right-to-work' effort

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Anti-worker forces in Oregon are continuing their battle of the ballot to fight off efforts to undercut worker standards and programs. The latest ballot referendum proposal would raise the retirement age for workers in the Public Employees Retirement System and reduce some benefits.

"This is part of a war that's being waged on older people across the country," said Renee DeLapp, political director for the Oregon Public Employee Union/SEIU. "The measure actually involves the public working against their self-interest to raise the retirement age at a time when the Republican Congress wants to do just that with the Social Security retirement level."

"This is a diversion tactic to take away our attention from the right-to-work ballot initiative," said Donald Loving, AFSCME District Council 75 public affairs director. "We're not going to be stupid because right to work is really the big thing."

The campaign is being conducted much like the right-to-work drive, with paid petitioners working at the three largest malls in the Portland area to seek signatures, Loving explained. "But we are trying to change the petition process so that people across the state will have to be petitioned instead of just in one district."

The Good Enough for Us Committee, backers of the constitutional amendment to raise the retirement age, have until July 5 to gather 97,681 signatures to place the measure on the November general election ballot.

The plan would increase the normal retirement age for Public Employees Retirement System members to 65, the age necessary to receive Social Security benefits, except for police and fire fighters.

Currently, PERS members hired prior to Jan. 1 can retire with full benefits at age 58 or after 30 years of service. Under a bill passed in the 1995 legislature, PERS members hired after Jan. 1 cannot retire with full benefits until age 60.

Earlier retirement still would be allowed with reduced benefits under the proposed change, but early retirees would not be eligible for medical benefits. Presently, a number of PERS members who retire before age 65 are eligible for at least partial medical benefits.

The proposal also prohibits PERS from offering a minimum rate of interest return on the retirement account. Currently, employees with PERS retirement accounts are eligible for a minimum 8 percent rate of interest on an annual basis as determined by the PERS board of directors.

For example, in 1994, PERS earned only 2 percent interest, but members were credited with 8 percent interest. In 1995, the accounts earned 20 percent interest and the accounts were credited with 11 percent interest.

The measure also would bar PERS from providing pension benefits that exceed 75 percent of an employee's final salary. There now is no limit to what a retiree's benefit may be as it is determined by a formula.

The Good Enough for Us Committee asserts the measure is intended to level the playing field between public and private pension benefits. But according to the Department of Labor, public employees' wages and benefits lag behind the private sector.

A related ballot initiative that narrowly passed in November 1994 called for public employees to begin contributing 6 percent of their salary to PERS. Many public-sector workers later received wage increases to offset the cost of their pension contribution.

Oregon public employee unions filed suit. The Oregon Supreme Court is expected to rule this spring. PERS covers nearly all nonfederal public-sector workers in Oregon, including 143,000 active members and 65,000 retirees, and has $20 billion in assets.

NLRB rules for Boilermaker 'salts'

H.B. Zachry Co. violated federal labor law by not considering hiring 18 Boilermakers who had written "voluntary union organizer" on their job applications, the National Labor Relations Board said.

This was the first NLRB ruling on the issue since the Supreme Court on Nov. 28 said that companies cannot discriminate against union organizers in their hiring. Many building and construction unions have been using this "salting" technique to organize new sites.

However, the board modified an order from an administrative law judge who had directed the company to hire the 18 applicants for work on a 1992 Jacksonville, Fla., project, with back pay.

Instead, the NLRB ordered the construction company to reconsider hiring the 18 workers, and offer back pay for those who would have been hired except for the employer's "unlawful conduct."

The board said that the ALJ's order that H.B. Zachry Co. hire the workers who had written "voluntary union organizer," or words to that effect, on their applications and compensate them with back pay was overbroad because the complaint issued was a refusal to consider employment and not a refusal-to-hire violation.

The board found violations of Section 8(a)(1) and (3) of the National Labor Relations Act, and ordered the company to prove that the workers who were hired were better qualified for the job than the 18 applicants who were not considered.

The board also agreed with the ALJ that the employer illegally terminated a union supporter and issued two disciplinary reprimands to another, threatened other employees with reprisals for union activities and offered overtime to nonunion employees to dissuade them from supporting the union.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court asked, "Can a worker be a company's 'employee'. . . if at the same time, a union pays that worker to help the union organize the company?" It answered in the affirmative, supporting the AFL-CIO's argument that as long as a person performs work under the company's supervision in return for wages, he or she is an employee.

"We agree with the National Labor Relations Board," Justice Stephen G. Breyer wrote for the court. "We hold that the board's construction of the word 'employee' is lawful; the term does not exclude paid union organizers."

— Muriel H. Cooper

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Labor's coalition with seniors resumed at the Executive Council meeting in Florida, where some 600 members of the National Council of Senior Citizens rallied against cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Information is power to grass roots

The AFL-CIO prepared to fend off new attacks on workers by the extremists in control of Congress, while looking back on a successful grass-roots campaign in 1995 that had House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and his cronies backpedaling.

The radical conservative agenda in the House and Senate represents "the most severe threat to the interests of working families than any other in the past 50 years," the AFL-CIO Executive Council said in a statement at its winter meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla.

Thanks to a revitalized grass-roots movement, however, labor and its allies "stood firm against the Contract With America" and its assault on working families in the first half of the 104th Congress, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the council, noting that only three small items of that contract were passed.

Legislative Director Peggy Taylor warned that "a lot of those fights will carry over into 1996," and the GOP will battle hard to overcome its embarrassment at accomplishing so little. She credited labor's grass-roots action as the source of most of the success in stalling the anti-worker agenda plotted by the Republican leadership.

"Enormous energy has been devoted to working with local union leaders and members to make them aware that the programs they have told their unions are important to them are being threatened by Congress," the council stated.

The AFL-CIO sent more than 2 million pieces of informational mail to union homes. Also, television and radio ads designed to inform, educate and energize union members aired in districts targeted for grass-roots action.

Workers and their families followed through. More than 140 meetings were held between groups of local union members and their members of Congress, more than any previous year. Those meetings were attended by more than 2,400 union members from 62 different unions.

In addition to the meetings, more than 500,000 calls were logged into the AFL-CIO's special hotline to Congress for union members.

During the five congressional recesses, dozens of congressional districts were targeted for intensive grass-roots action in response to the GOP's efforts to slash Medicare, Medicaid and education to help pay for a tax cut for the rich. Special attention also was paid to efforts to roll back health and safety laws, wage protections, attacks on pensions and other threats to workers.

Staff from the federation and national unions assigned to these districts worked with local AFL-CIOs and rank-and-file union members. They attended lawmakers' town meetings, participated in demonstrations, circulated petitions, leafleted work sites and joined phone drives.

"While the 1995 activities represented an enormous step forward from previous years, we understand there is a lot of work to be done," the council said.

While the GOP may continue to press for a budget deal that would cut these programs to fund a tax cut for the rich, it is uncertain if negotiations with the administration will resume.

Of more immediate concern is the current continuing resolution, which provides funding for the Department of Labor and other agencies affected by the five appropriations bills not yet passed. The current CR expires March 15.

An effort is under way to lump all these into one omnibus appropriations bill for the rest of the fiscal year. But debate over the levels of funding could slow that process and another short-term CR could be offered.

The Labor/HHS bill contains a number of riders the AFL-CIO opposes, but many were dropped in the House bill that passed March 7. Dropped were a ban on DOL from implementing and enforcing President Clinton's executive order on strikers, which is in limbo since an appeals court ruling struck it down, and a rider limiting the use of certain types of injunctions by the National Labor Relations Board. The bill maintains the ban on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration issuing new ergonomic rules, and the collection and analysis of ergonomic data.

Other specific issues — many at the behest of the business community — that are expected to move this session, include:

- House and Senate action on OSHA measures that strip the agency of much of its authority to enforce workplace safety laws and deny workers their job safety rights **(See story, this page)**.
- A Senate vote on the TEAM Act, which would allow employers to form and dominate employee workplace committees, much like company unions of the 1920s and 1930s.
- An effort to limit unions' use of corporate campaigns, which help counterbalance the power that big business wields.
- Another attack on transit workers bargaining rights that are now protected by Section 13(c) of the Transit Act.

— Mike Hall

Senate moves OSHA 'reform'; veto promised

By Mike Hall

President Clinton will veto job safety legislation now before the Senate and House because it "threatens health and safety protections and compromises (the government's ability) to maintain a credible enforcement program," Vice President Gore told the AFL-CIO Executive Council.

The Senate version, S. 1423, would exempt 94 percent of America's workplaces from routine inspections, limit workers' ability to get unsafe workplaces inspected and slash penalties for lawmakers.

"At a time when so much needs to be done to improve worker safety, Republican leaders in Congress are pushing legislation that will take away workers' rights and protections, weaken enforcement and put workers in great danger," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

Labor's strong opposition was on display when the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee tried to mark up the legislation Feb. 28, as the committee room was filled with some 40 members of the Mine Workers, Painters, Plumbers, Service Employees and Postal Workers.

In a major surprise, the panel approved by voice vote an amendment from Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) that would debar for up to three years federal contractors who have been cited for serious safety and health violations.

Later, committee Chair Nancy L. Kassebaum (R-Kan.) expressed second thoughts about the provisions after hearing from business interests after the first vote. In a later session March 5, the committee reversed itself and struck down the amendment and later passed the bill.

Some backers of the Senate proposal claim it is a moderate alternative to a House bill, H.R. 1834, offered by Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.), which is expected to be marked up this month.

"There is nothing moderate about legislation that takes away protections from two out of three American workers," Sweeney said.

He added that had S. 1423 been law in 1991, even the Hamlet, N.C., poultry plant, where a fire killed 25 workers, could have been exempt from inspection.

Business concerns paramount

"This bill makes what should be the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's paramount concern — worker protection — secondary to the concerns of business interests," AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor said in a letter to the committee urging the bill's defeat.

Much of the bill is seriously flawed, but there are three principal reasons for labor's steadfast opposition, she told the committee.

The majority of employers — some 94 percent — could be exempted from routine OSHA inspections merely by demonstrating that the company has met minimal safety and health criteria. Some 67 million workers could see their job safety protections eliminated.

The bill strips workers of their rights by eliminating the right to have the government investigate workplace hazards in response to a complaint about dangerous and possibly life-threatening conditions.

S. 1423 also attacks the rights of workers by allowing employers to establish, control and dominate safety and health committees.

That "represents a back-handed attempt to pass the controversial TEAM Act," Taylor said.

The bill also significantly weakens OSHA's enforcement authority by slashing penalties for violators. Warnings instead of citations could be permitted for all violations, even those that threaten death or serious injuries.

In addition, the bill calls for automatic and deep penalty reductions for employers who violate the law.

Another bill that would undermine workplace safety, on regulatory reform that calls for reviews of all current regulations, was pulled from the House floor March 5. However, the bill may be revived later.

JOB SAFETY

New TB directive issued

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which is working on a tuberculosis exposure rule, has in the interim issued new enforcement guidelines to help protect workers.

The directive details standards of protection that employers must follow, including early identification of people with active TB, creation of controls, regular medical exams, periodic evaluations and reassessments after exposure to TB, case management of infected employees and worker education and training.

Workers in health care facilities, correctional institutions, nursing homes, homeless shelters and drug treatment centers are at higher risk for exposure to the disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Employers can be cited for violations of OSHA's general-duty clause, its respiratory protection standards, accident prevention standards, access to employee exposure and medical records standards and the standard on recording and reporting occupational injuries and illnesses.

OSHA standard to come

OSHA has announced its plan to propose a safety and health program management standard this spring.

The standard would cover all employers and hazards and would be flexible to account for employer size and worksite characteristics, officials said.

A draft contains the elements of hazard assessment, illness and injury incident investigation, hazard control, management commitment and leadership, employee participation, training, record keeping and annual program evaluation.

Data collection set

Court subpoenas or on-site inspections may be needed if employers ignore a new injury and illness survey launched last month by OSHA.

The data collection survey was mailed this month to some 80,000 employers in manufacturing and other high-hazard industries, officials said. Under existing OSHAct and agency recordkeeping rules, extraordinary measures may be employed to ensure the information is released to the government, OSHA Administrator Joseph A. Dear said.

OSHA said it planned to expand the survey, but for now is concentrating on manufacturing and 14 other industries with high injury and illness rates. The survey is different from that conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Mine fatalities rise

A total of 98 workers were killed in coal, metal and other mining operations in 1995, an increase of nearly 15 percent from the year before.

Virtually all of the increased fatalities occurred in surface-mining operations, with accidents involving trucks the single most frequent type of fatal accident overall.

Fatalities held steady in underground coal mines, and dropped slightly in the underground metal and nonmetal mining industry. There were no workers killed in mine explosions, the Department of Labor said.



AP Wide World

Rail union workers join in a San Francisco rally Feb. 25 to protest the planned merger of Union Pacific and Southern Pacific, which BMWE President Mac Fleming said would "devastate jobs and service."

Rail industry blamed for crashes

By David Kameras

The Locomotive Engineers blamed management foot-dragging on urgently needed safety enhancements for a spate of recent rail accidents, including two fatal incidents in Maryland and New Jersey.

"We have lost 17 engineers in the last two years, four of whom died this month due to these accidents," BLE President Ronald P. McLaughlin told the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. "In some instances, we feel that the disregard for rail safety by the railroad companies has sent a death warrant to our members with faulty equipment, improper rest and improper or no inspections.

"We hold the railroad management and (the Federal Railroad Administration) responsible for the loss of our engineers," he said.

Searching for a common thread linking the accidents, McLaughlin described several factors that singly or in combination may have contributed: lack of adequate back-up or fail-safe procedures to protect against possible human error, excessive crew fatigue, inadequate inspections, testing and maintenance of brakes, poor enforcement of safety laws, payroll cutbacks at the expense of safety and failure of the industry to install technological improvements.

Crew fatigue and a possible signal malfunction are being investigated in the Maryland crash, which killed 11 people. In New Jersey, where three died, the engineer had worked an overnight split shift of more than 14 hours. The Railroad Signalmen have pointed to preliminary federal data suggesting that signals in both incidents were operating properly.

"What is so disturbing to rail labor is that these issues are not new, and we constantly meet roadblocks from the industry and FRA to our recommendations for adequate safety protection for our members and the public," McLaughlin said during a Feb. 27 hearing.

"We do realize that the Federal Railroad Administration cannot adequately police the railroad industry with the present number of inspectors that are allotted by Congress," he said, noting that the agency has just over half the number determined to be needed as far back as 1978.

McLaughlin identified a number of hazards that if addressed would substantially improve rail safety:

- Cumulative fatigue caused by irregular work schedules and inadequate sleep opportunities.
- Drastically reduced employment and crew sizes.
- Failure by the FRA to meet congressionally mandated deadlines for implementing safety improvements.
- Substandard radio communications and inadequate signal systems.
- The use of "push-pull" commuter operations with the locomotive at the rear, and improper train make-up.

Adding to these problems is the under-reporting of "accidents and injuries using loopholes in the system to skew the number and types of accidents and incidents reported to FRA," said Maintenance of Way Employees President Mac A. Fleming.

In testimony provided to the House Transportation and Infrastructure subcommittee on railroads, Fleming said many carriers harass and intimidate employees into withholding reports, and "actively engage in attempts to influence and/or manipulate medical treatment for injured rail workers to assure the injury remains unreportable to FRA." The same under-reporting holds true for train derailments, he said.

Fleming has been especially critical of the use of "cost-benefit analysis" to delay implementation of safety regulations that could have saved some of the 53 roadway workers killed since 1986 after being struck by moving trains or equipment. "This is one of the most dangerous industries in the world," he said.

In another rail development, unions are working with the Executive Council Strategic Approaches Committee to develop coordinated opposition to the proposed merger of the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific railroads, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka reported.

Fleming, an AFL-CIO vice president, told the council, "The merger has the potential to devastate jobs in the rail industry." He pointed to the abandonment of short lines in the wake of the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe mergers, noting that "there would be a loss of services as well as a loss of jobs."

The unions are fighting the merger through the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department. Joel Parker, vice president of the Transportation Communications Union, said labor would stand up to the rail leviathan. "American workers and consumers will not be held captive to a single monopoly railroad," he said.

Labor-backed health care portability bill advances in Senate

Workers seeking relief from health care-induced "job-lock" may soon receive it in the form of congressional action.

A bipartisan measure sponsored by Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Nancy L. Kassebaum (R-Kan.) would bar insurance companies from dropping people when they switch jobs, or from denying coverage for pre-existing conditions. It would guarantee access to insurance for workers who have been laid off or leave their jobs to start a business or take early retirement as long as they have paid premiums for at least 18 months.

S. 1028 would relieve anxieties faced by workers afraid to change jobs — the so-called "job-locked" — because of concomitant health care changes.

Workers identified the inability to change jobs without incurring substantial change in coverage as a significant problem during the most recent campaign to win national reform of the U.S. health care system. The fear of being left without coverage for dependents with pre-existing conditions or with vastly reduced coverage for major medical problems has led many workers to remain in place to hold on to health benefits.

The AFL-CIO joined with the National Association of Manufacturers, AARP, the Healthcare Leadership Council and numerous other constituent groups in pledging support for the Senate measure, pronouncing it "one bright spot in a dismal legislative environment for health care."

AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor said in a statement that the bill takes on "the worst transgressions of the current health care system without piling on controversial provisions destined to doom its passage."

"Working families and the AFL-CIO fully support efforts to expand coverage, contain costs, improve quality and make health care providers more accountable," she said.

S. 1028 won unanimous support from the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee and tentatively is scheduled for floor action April 18.

The House also is working on a version of the bill, characterized as including guaranteed portability of coverage with a more expanded focus.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

'America Needs a Raise' to go on the road

Bal Harbour, Fla.

The AFL-CIO will help to give a deep, grass-roots voice to its declaration that America needs a raise, taking the message on the road with a series of town hall meetings spanning the country.

The meetings are designed to air the defining issue of the federation in its major educational campaign during this election year: the growing gap between the rich and everyone else at a time of high productivity and soaring profits.

The goal, President John J. Sweeney said, is "to transform individual concerns into a compelling national cause, sensitizing politicians and policy-makers as we mount a massive educational campaign to motivate unrepresented as well as represented workers."

"We'll take what we've learned and raise the issue of income inequality to a new level of public visibility," Sweeney pledged. "We'll use it to drive our grass-roots lobbying against cuts in programs working families depend on. And it will fuel a nationwide organizing drive to bring union wages and benefits to workers who need and deserve them."

Sweeney indicated that "America Needs a Raise" also will be used to evaluate political candidates who want labor's support and to help them campaign "on this most important of issues."

"Wage growth for Americans has become a powerful point for debate," he told the council in January. "No other issue has more potential to spotlight the need for strong unions. During this year, we plan to make this issue the basis for all our political and organizing work.

"The labor movement has a moral responsibility to take the lead on this issue," he said.

Every candidate running for office should be challenged to address labor's proposals, Sweeney said. "The fall elections give us an opportunity to have a major public debate on the future of our economy and the kind of society we want."

The town hall meetings, scheduled between late March and the end of May, will be held in Atlanta; Baltimore; Billings, Mont.; Birmingham, Ala.; Boston; Buffalo, N.Y.; Chicago; Cleveland; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas; Denver; Detroit-Lansing; Erie, Pa.; Las Vegas; Los Angeles; Louisville, Ky.; Milwaukee; Nashville, Tenn.; New York; Oklahoma City; Pittsburgh; Portland, Maine; Portland, Ore.; Raleigh-Durham, N.C.; San Jose, Calif.; Seattle; Trenton, N.J.; Washington; and Wichita, Kan.

The federation's wage campaign also will tap into some two dozen state and local initiatives to increase wages, including "living-wage" campaigns that are being championed by unions and state and local AFL-CIOs.

This surge in grass-roots action "is one of the clearest indications that stagnant and falling wages are beginning to resonate and get a reaction from people," Gerald M. Shea, Sweeney's assistant for government affairs, told the council.

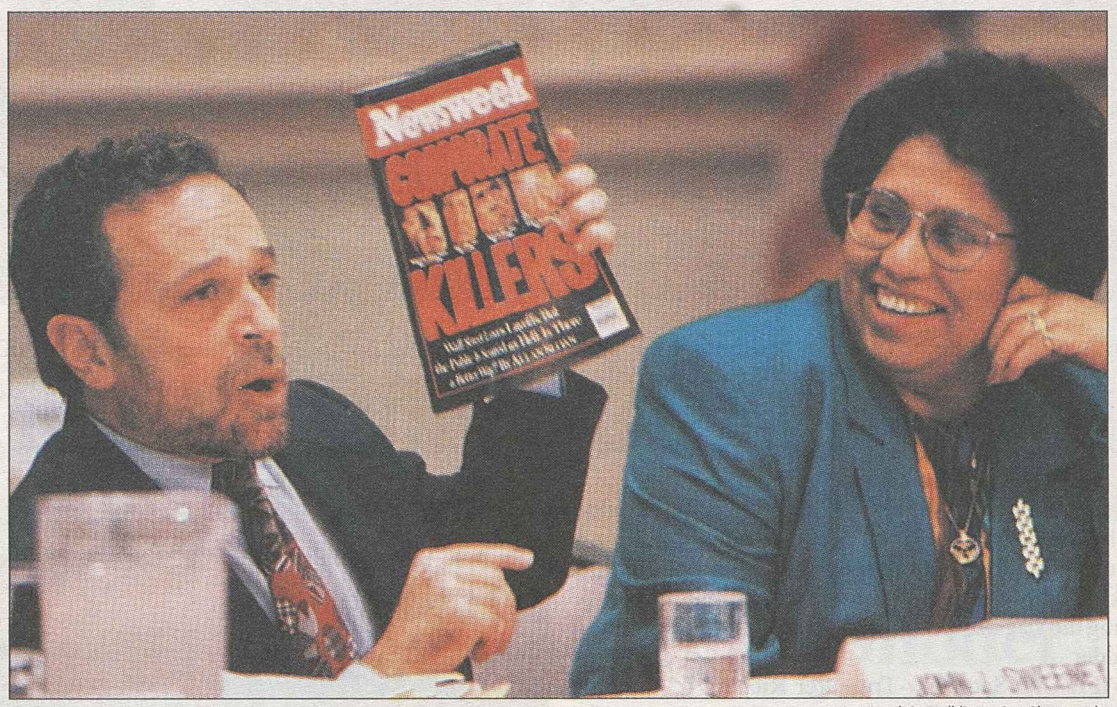
The Living Wage Initiative put together by a coalition of the California AFL-CIO and other labor, religious and community groups, seeks to put on the November ballot an increase in the state's hourly minimum wage, from $4.25 to $5 in 1997, and to $5.75 in 1998.

"By forcing the debate onto our terrain through the ballot initiative process, we will do much more than increase the minimum wage," said Jack F. Henning, California AFL-CIO executive secretary-treasurer. "We will help elevate the living-wage issue in national political debate and show the political world that supporting livable wages helps candidates win elections."

Polling data reflects strong support for the initiative. Fifty-two percent found very convincing the arguments that inflation has placed the minimum wage's purchasing power at a 40-year low, and that it is so low that it punishes hard work. Even after exposure to the opposition's strongest arguments, swing voters and low-income voters gave it solid support.

"We must retake the offensive," the California coalition stated. "By placing the initiative on the ballot, we will wrest the political debate away from our enemies. We will mobilize low-wage workers to register and vote. At the same time, we will reach out to swing voters who are troubled about the direction of the economy."

— David Kameras



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich holds up a copy of Newsweek magazine to illustrate his point that U.S. corporations are failing to live up to their responsibilities as good citizens.

Wage gap seen as defining issue

By David Kameras

The AFL-CIO linked its legislative, organizing, bargaining and political efforts under a single, powerful theme: "America Needs a Raise."

"While productivity, profits, executive pay and the stock market keep going up, working-family incomes keep going down, widening the gap between the rich and the rest of us and creating a dangerous atmosphere of social and economic conflict," the Executive Council declared at its winter meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla.

That gap "is becoming a sinkhole of social and economic conflict, and if we don't fill it in, it is going to swallow us all," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told reporters.

Sweeney announced the federation would hold a series of town hall meetings from late March through May to hear from workers on the impact of stagnant wages on their families. Organized labor also will support "living wage" campaigns in states and cities around the country, further illuminating the issue. **(See story, at left).**

Labor's "America Needs a Raise" campaign was heralded by Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, who told the council, "What you are doing is terrific. We have the beginnings of a movement in this country that is not just a trade union movement, although it is led by unions."

Productivity growth in private business rose an average of 2 percent annually from 1989 to the first three quarters of 1995, twice the rate of the 1980s, enabling profits and executive salaries to skyrocket.

"But productivity growth in recent decades has not led to higher real wages as it should," said AFL-CIO chief economist Rudy Oswald during a panel discussion on the problem. "Instead, the buying power of workers has declined as employers continue to make every effort to hold down wages."

"The country has been sold a bill of goods on how it has happened," Rep. David R. Obey (Wis.), ranking Democrat on the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee, told the council. "We need to give the American people a different explanation for declining wages."

Obey pointed to deregulation, offshore production, striker replacement and skyrocketing CEO pay as contributing factors. "Merchants complain about labor costs, but not their own gains," he said.

While advances in technology, globalization and other factors have played a role, they don't explain the gains from the economy's increased efficiency that have been siphoned off into ever-higher corporate profits and executive pay, Obey said. Public policies pursued by the Reagan and Bush administrations added downward pressure on wages.

> *"(The wage) gap is becoming a sinkhole of social and economic conflict, and if we don't fill it in, it is going to swallow us all."*
>
> **—AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney**

Also participating in the panel discussion was Geoffrey Garin, a pollster for Peter A. Hart Associates, who pointed out that 57 percent of Americans in a recent survey stated they were dissatisfied with the way the economy is performing.

"Among the most serious concerns that people have about the future," he said, "are that they will not be able to afford health insurance (70 percent), they won't have retirement benefits (68 percent), that prices are rising faster than incomes (57 percent) and that part-time jobs are replacing full-time jobs (57 percent)."

In its statement, the Executive Council noted that real earnings have declined 12 percent since 1979, while 97 percent of the increase in household incomes went to the richest 20 percent, "with middle-income families and the poor left to scramble over the remaining 3 percent."

At the same time, productivity went up 24 percent, but workers didn't share in those gains. As a result, the top 20 percent get half the nation's total income and control 85 percent of the wealth, "an alarming maldistribution of wealth."

The federation's wage-gap campaign, besides promoting public awareness of income inequality, is designed to:

- Build a powerful grass-roots movement against cuts in federal, state and local programs upon which working families depend, such as Medicare, Medicaid, education loans and environmental protection, and to push for a quick, big increase in the federal minimum wage.
- Persuade employers to practice corporate responsibility for their employees and communities.
- Accent the importance of unions in bringing economic justice to workers, which in turn should energize a nationwide organizing campaign to bring union wages and benefits to millions of workers who need and deserve them.



Photos by Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Detroit newspaper strikers stand to applaud the Executive Council as the union leaders pledged about $100,000 in donations to the strikers' relief fund.

Detroit campaign takes aim at flagship papers

By James B. Parks

The AFL-CIO escalated the campaign for a fair contract for striking Detroit newspaper employees, asking subscribers, advertisers and distributors to stop using the flagship publications of Gannett and Knight-Ridder.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka told the Executive Council that the federation, working through the appropriate unions, is contacting hotels, airlines and large advertisers to discourage support of USA Today, Gannett's premier newspaper. United and Northwest airlines already have stopped distributing the paper and United has pulled its ads.

As several Detroit strikers looked on, the council also authorized use of the COPE list in South Florida for a mailing asking subscribers to cancel the Miami Herald, Knight-Ridder's top paper. Strikers from Detroit will rotate 10-day shifts in Miami, staffing phone banks along with labor activists in the area.

"Gannett and Knight-Ridder are the largest media conglomerates in the world, and can absorb huge losses in Detroit," Trumka said. "We must expand on a national level."

The visiting strikers, including Susan Watson, co-editor of the striker-produced Detroit Sunday Journal, stood and applauded as council members pledged major financial support from their unions for the strikers, about $100,000 on top of the nearly $600,000 raised for the relief fund so far.

But Trumka, who also heads the Strategic Approaches Committee, reminded council members that much more needs to be done to ensure that each striking family is adopted. It requires $92,000 a week just to give striking IBT members a stipend of up to $155 each week, he said.

Contributions to the striker relief fund should be mailed to: DNA Strike Relief Fund, Detroit Metropolitan AFL-CIO, 2550 West Grand Blvd., Detroit, Mich. 48208.

Trumka also urged union leaders to talk with unionized companies and vendors about advertising in the striker-produced Detroit Sunday Journal. The Journal is located at 3100 East Jefferson, Detroit, Mich. 48207. Publisher William Brown can be reached at 313/567-9818.

The employees of the Detroit News, owned by Gannett, and Knight-Ridder's Free Press have been on strike since July 13 after negotiations failed to produce a new agreement. Management and imported scabs from other papers are producing the newspapers. Hired union-busting security goons from Vance and Huffmaster are delivering the papers.

The expanded campaign scored its first victory when the Bal Harbour, Fla., hotel hosting the council's winter meeting scuttled plans to distribute 500 free copies daily of the Miami Herald to guests during the meeting.

The Herald's Spanish supplement, El Nuevo Herald, also has been targeted by key Miami Hispanic leaders, who are demanding that their community have its own paper, not just a translation of the Herald, which some 115,000 subscribers pay extra to receive.

The Teamsters and Jobs With Justice coordinated a national leafleting campaign Feb. 7 at 30 Knight-Ridder locations. The leaflet explained the impact of the Detroit strike on other Knight-Ridder newspapers.

Support grows in Detroit

Support for the strikers is growing daily in Detroit. Twenty-four persons, including Detroit City Council President Maryann Mahaffey, a Catholic bishop and two Episcopal bishops were arrested during a March 6 demonstration in front of the Detroit News building in support of the strikers.

Detroit's religious community is deeply involved in helping the strikers. Some 1.3 million Catholics live in the Detroit area, Trumka said, and the unions are working to get a "don't buy" insert in the Sunday bulletins at every church.

An independent audit of the papers, conducted by International Demographics, showed the combined Sunday circulation was down to 700,000, a 32 percent decline since the strike began. "This data confirms exactly what we've been saying," said Al Derey, president of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, which represents the strikers. "Hundreds of thousands of people have stopped reading the News and Free Press."

Both newspapers refused to participate in an audit by the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the largest newspaper auditing service.

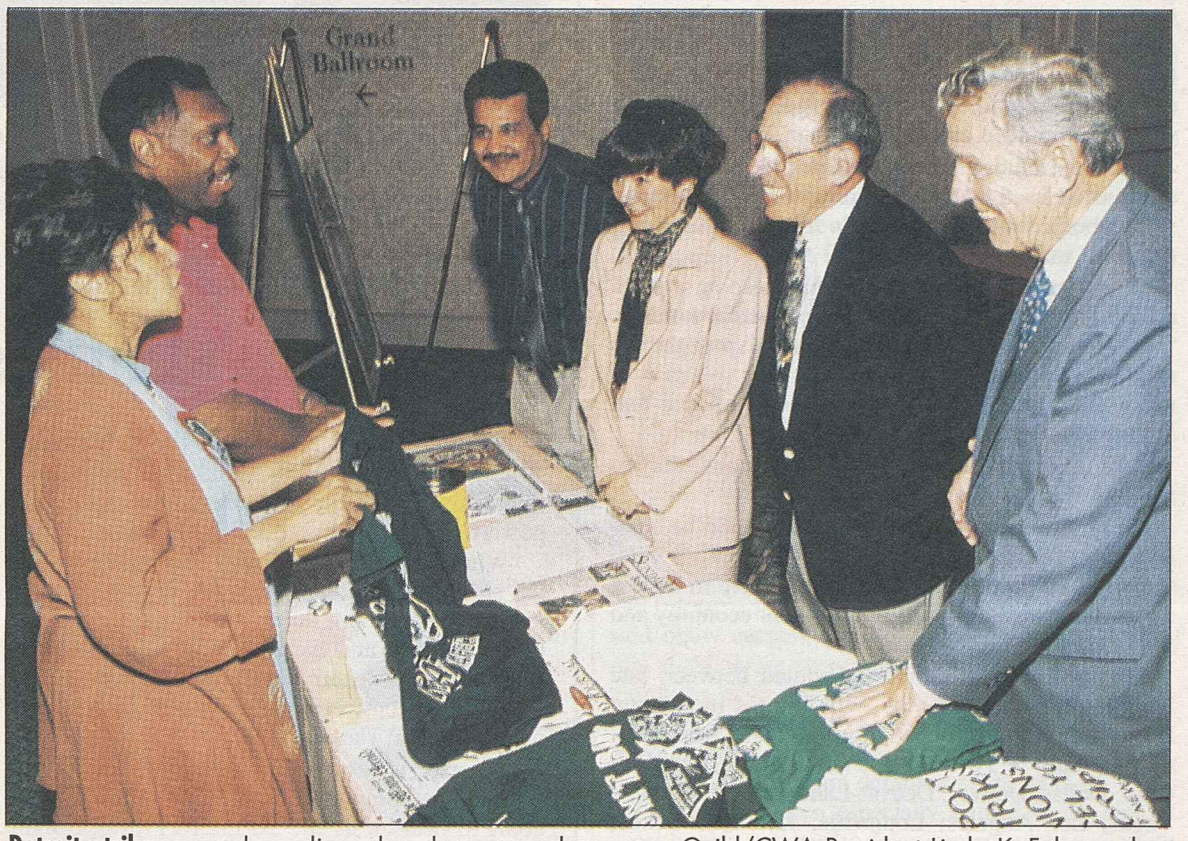
Former Detroit hockey star Gordie Howe and his wife, Colleen, visited striking Teamsters Feb. 28 and pledged to donate part of the proceeds from their autobiography to the strikers.

"We're pleased to have a chance to do something for the striking newspaper workers at a time when they need a helping hand," Colleen Howe said.

Stockholders of both Gannett and Knight-Ridder will have the opportunity to hear what the strike is doing to corporate bottom lines when union-sponsored resolutions are discussed during both annual meetings, held in late April or early May.

The resolutions call for changes in corporate governance and address issues of the "cost of aggression" against the unions, and of alleged insider trading by company CEOs who unloaded stock just before announcing that the losses from the strike were three times what they had predicted.

The AFL-CIO, through the Strategic Approaches Committee, is providing staff on the ground along with national staff to coordinate activities. The national campaign is led by Joe Uehlein of the Industrial Union Department. Ed Burke of the IBT is the on-site coordinator.



Detroit strike paraphernalia sales drew crowds throughout the Executive Council meeting. From right, Graphic Communications Union President James J. Norton, UAW President Stephen Yokich, The Newspaper Guild/CWA President Linda K. Foley and an unidentified visitor talk with strikers John Jackson of GCIU's pressmen and Susan Watson, a Guild member who is co-editor of the Detroit Sunday Journal.

Bridgestone-Firestone dispute

Trumka also reported to the council that the international campaign against Bridgestone/Firestone has grown to include unions affiliated with the ICEM, the international trade secretariat representing chemical, energy and mine workers. The ICEM will organize a world council meeting of Bridgestone workers March 14-15 in Nashville, the company's U.S. headquarters.

The National Labor Relations Board's Indianapolis region filed a complaint against the giant Japan-based tiremaker Feb. 13 that parallels a Jan. 31 complaint in another region. Both charge Bridgestone/Firestone committed unfair labor practices by illegally firing striking workers by falsely stating that they had been "permanently replaced," discharging strikers for lawful picket-line conduct and refusing to reinstate strikers after the union made an unconditional offer to return to work.

About 4,200 Bridgestone/Firestone employees in five states, formerly Rubber Workers, were forced out on strike July 12, 1994, almost three months after their contract had expired.

The workers suspended their strike against the giant Japanese tire manufacturer on May 22, 1995, and switched strategies in an effort for a new contract. About 900 of the workers who were "permanently replaced" still have not returned to work, the union said.

Credit card pact offers big return to union cause

Sweeney: A better deal for members, movement

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The AFL-CIO and participating unions would gain some $375 million over five years under a tentative agreement to change vendors for the Union Privilege MasterCard program.

The Executive Council agreed to enter final negotiations with Household International to take over the credit card from the Bank of New York. The Union Privilege MasterCard is used by approximately 2 million union members whose interest payments bring significant revenues to the bank.

"It's a better deal for our members and it sends a good portion of what are now the bank's profits back into our movement so we can help build a more secure future for working Americans," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

Unless the Bank of New York matches the offer from Household, the new contract becomes effective Feb. 28, 1997.

The estimated $375 million that the federation and participating unions would receive over the first five years of the new contract was negotiated for use of the AFL-CIO and union names on the cards. These payments are expected to be higher in the second five years, giving unions a significant amount of money to devote to rebuilding the labor movement.

The card rate will remain at prime plus 5 percent. The current rate of 13.5 percent is more than 4 percent below the national average — compared to 17.4 percent for cards issued to members of the American Association of Retired Persons and 16.4 percent for members of the American Nurses Association.

One of union members' numerous privileges include the ability to transfer their balances to their Union Privilege card and pay what the nation's best commercial customers pay — the prime rate.

The prime rate applies until the balance is paid off, rather than the usual six or nine months most credit card companies offer.

The consumer finance company also included unprecedented commitments to union neutrality, to build union and buy union, and to develop a $35 million strike loan program.

Union members good credit risks

"Household was willing to share a good deal of its program revenues because union members have proven to be the best credit card customers in the industry," said Hans Morris of Smith Barney, which along with the Auremma Consulting Group was hired to guide the negotiations on behalf of the AFL-CIO. "They use their cards, they are loyal and they pay their bills on time."

In fact, AFL-CIO members are 50 percent less delinquent on credit, Morris said. Thus, Household would have a more flexible approval process to enable more members to qualify for the credit card.

The credit card program also would be expanded to meet the needs of a wide range of union members, including a card with a grace period for members who pay their balances in full each month and a secured credit card for members with past credit problems.

A J.D. Powers study found that the Household Finance credit card received the second-highest customer satisfaction rating of any credit card in the country.

The terms of the agreement are subject to final contract documentation and approval by Household's board of directors, as well as the right of the Bank of New York to match the agreement. Three bids were received, including one from the Bank of New York.

"We accepted the bid from Household because it maintains our rate, pays us millions of dollars in royalties and carries commitments from the company to union principles," Sweeney explained.

Household International is a major provider of consumer financial services in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Its primary businesses include Household Finance Corp., the nation's oldest consumer finance company, and Household Bank, one of the largest issuers of private label and general purpose credit cards in the United States.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Sen. Ron Wyden thanks the Executive Council for labor's pivotal support in the Oregon special election.

Labor will build on Oregon model

Continued from Page 1

organizing tactics for the Labor '96 mobilization. That training began March 2 for AFL-CIO field staff at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies.

Gore met with the council and praised labor's political efforts, predicting that the all-out AFL-CIO campaign could help not only reverse the anti-worker tide in the House, but could change the Senate as well.

Later, talking to reporters about labor's member mobilization, Gore said, "My own first-hand impression from the race in Oregon is that organized labor put Ron Wyden over the top in that Senate race."

Wyden agreed with that assessment, appearing before the council to thank labor for its efforts. "What you did in the field meant everything," he said. "It was a massive, extraordinary grass-roots field organization that labor committed to the campaign.

"Your textbook campaign, in terms of a field organization, is something we should be looking to around the country," he said. "People-to-people politics still counts in the age of television. We have a model in Oregon that can be duplicated around the country."

Political Director Steve Rosenthal elaborated on the Oregon effort at a news conference, telling reporters that "we signed up about 300 rank-and-file members of our various affiliates to be active in the campaign and beyond the campaign, so that there is an organization there in place permanently to continue to work year-round on these legislative and political issues."

The political plan approved by the council eventually would provide for grass-roots action committees of at least 100 activists in every congressional district in the country.

"We will commit every resource at our disposal to register voters, educate and inform our members as well as the general public," the council stated. "And we will rally our efforts to turn out massive numbers of voters in local, state and federal elections this fall as we reclaim America."

"We are going into every congressional district, every area of the country where we have membership," Sweeney told reporters. "This will be a national campaign from the bottom up. We will be building on our strongest resource — our membership activism."

In its statement, the council pointed out that union activism in 1995, including some $8 million in issues advertising, had "hit the nerve center of the (House Speaker Newt) Gingrich extremists."

"As a result of the victory in Oregon and the grass-roots legislative and political plan we've begun, the National Republican Congressional Committee and the National Republican Senatorial Committee have filed FEC complaints against us. Their cronies at the Heritage Foundation published a 'study' in an attempt to limit the ability of unions to engage members in legislative and political battles. And the Wall Street Journal accused us of 'Ruining Politics.'

"The AFL-CIO wears these specious charges as a badge of honor, and we take them as an incentive to continue to win and engage and empower our members and workers in America," the council stated.

Buchanan 'talks talk, doesn't walk walk'

While Republican presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan is trying to tap into the frustration of workers over stagnant wages and bad trade deals, his record shows that he is opposed to almost every policy that would aid working families.

"Buchanan has come very late to the issue of declining worker incomes in the midst of economic plenty," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told reporters in Bal Harbour, Fla., where the Executive Council was meeting.

"He is against the minimum wage, he is against wage standards, against worker health and safety protections, against the right of workers to freely join and form unions and for the supply-side economic policies that have transferred billions of dollars from the tattered pocketbooks of middle-income Americans to the silk-lined purses of the rich over the past 15 years," Sweeney said.

Sweeney also roundly criticized Buchanan's social views, calling him a racist and an anti-Semite. "He bashes women right along with labor and immigrants," he said. "We are none of these things. Our movement isn't about dividing people through fear, it's about bringing people together through compassion."

AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee, chair of the federation's Political Education Committee, told reporters that Buchanan's rhetorical embrace of labor's position on declining wages and fair trade, and the followship of other Republican candidates, made him feel "like a songwriter who wrote a song about seven years ago and he couldn't get anybody to publish it or sing it, and then all of a sudden Pat Buchanan is singing part of it, Bob Dole is singing part of it, probably Lamar Alexander, once he looks at the polls in a consistent way, will be singing part of it."

But "the proof is in the pudding," he said. "If they go back and pass legislation to help American workers, then that's a different kind of ball game."

Sweeney assailed Buchanan for "wanting to build a wall around our country. We want to tear down walls in other countries — not so workers compete one against the other, but so working families everywhere can share a decent portion of what their labors produce."

"Saying Patrick Buchanan speaks for workers is like saying the Ayatollah Khomeini speaks for priests and rabbis," Sweeney said. "I don't think working Americans are going to be fooled by a presidential candidate who talks the talk, but won't walk the walk."

— James B. Parks

Unions to get incentives for new organizing

Continued from Page 1

size and impact of organizing among national and international unions" by looking at organizing proposals with "the greatest strategic importance and likelihood of success," the council said.

Proposals should target companies, industries or geographic areas of importance and with clear growth potential. Strategic plans should build sufficient leverage to win recognition and a contract from employers, give visibility to the cause and describe how the campaign can be used to recruit new talent, preferably developed with the help of the organizing institute.

Multiunion campaigns that use innovative techniques to increase worker power in regional or national industries are strongly encouraged.

"These resources will be available to those unions that are willing to restructure and willing to go forward, who will provide leadership and coordinate support for respective organizations, promoting their efforts, willing to share with one another," Laborers President Arthur Coia, chair of the Organizing Committee, told reporters. "It's a coordinated effort."

Priority will be given to proposals that represent additional spending by unions, rather than a substitution of AFL-CIO expenditures for union expenditures, he added.

All organizing fund applications should be sent to President Sweeney, c/o AFL-CIO, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Some unions already have submitted proposals, as well as committed to increase their organizing programs. The Teamsters have allocated almost $25 million over four years; the Laborers have $6 million already allocated for organizing; and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers have increased their organizing budget by 12 percent, Coia said.

Labor must be innovative in its approach and work together "as a movement, rather than as a collection of individual unions," if it is to succeed, Sweeney added.

Organizing Director Richard Bensinger said the new department would increase AFL-CIO efforts to recruit and train organizers, as well as work with local and regional leaders on refocusing and restructuring their unions to do more successful organizing.

"In the past, we have organized worksite by worksite," Bensinger noted. "That allowed us to win some battles, but the war continued. Even when we win, we don't have enough power because we haven't taken on the whole industry or corporation. We need the capacity to take on and change the David and Goliath formula where we are always the David.

"It's a question of bringing strategic approaches, which the AFL-CIO is developing an internal capacity to do," Bensinger said. "Corporate America, at the flick of the switch, can lay off 40,000 people. We don't have a button to push or a magic answer, but I think in the long run we have a lot more to offer American workers. We know the value in organizing."

The problems and promise were laid out in vivid detail by several organizers invited to tell their stories to the council. Monica Russo, UNITE's southern organizing director, said workers are waiting for unions to help them. "I talk to unorganized workers in the South every day . . . and they're tired of wage cuts, stretch-outs, speed-ups, contracting out, racism, temporary labor and sexual harassment," she said.

"Organizing is not easy," said Yamira Merino, a LIUNA organizer who helped change conditions in a Los Angeles shrimp processing plant by organizing 150 workers.

"It takes a collective effort, not only from organizers, but from workers," she said.

The promise of the new AFL-CIO commitment to organizing attracted House Minority Whip David E. Bonior (D-Mich.), who asked to sit in on the organizing discussion.

"Basic values of family and workers need to be rekindled, and the labor movement is the vehicle that can make that happen," Bonior said. "The effort you are putting into organizing will pay big dividends. It will bring folks together to organize for the best values in America, and it will be with us for a long time."

Union Summer brings youth to movement

By Muriel H. Cooper

The AFL-CIO has issued a call for all unions, their members and families to become involved in Union Summer, a national campaign of young workers and students modeled after the 1960s' Freedom Summer voting rights fight.

The federation plans to put thousands of young people into organizing campaigns and to help also with get-out-the-vote activity and social and economic activism, Union Summer coordinator Andy Levin told the Executive Council meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla.

Unions can participate by putting activists to work on ongoing campaigns, or by sponsoring their young members and their members' children to participate between late May and Labor Day. The recruits will transport themselves to the sites, then receive $210 a week, with affiliated unions and state and local central bodies asked to provide lodging, food and transportation during the intensive three-week campaigns.

The program has the twofold mission of "harnessing the energy of young Americans of conscience for the cause of working people and to build into the next generation an understanding that the labor movement is at the heart of the struggle for social justice," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the council.

Union Summer will provide a vehicle to spotlight the problems faced by workers today, Sweeney said. "The crisis of a declining union movement is the crisis of workers in America. All working families have been affected," he said.

The Organizing Institute is leading the recruitment in union halls and on college campuses. A video appeal to the MTV generation by the AFL-CIO's TV production division soon will be distributed to unions, who also were asked to inform union members about the campaign through their publications.

The young unionists and students will be assigned to three-week placements at 10 to 20 Union Summer sites around the country, with sites announced April 1. Activists will spend some of their time working on local organizing campaigns for affiliates and nationally coordinated projects.

"The best proposals will demonstrate an ability to use activists productively and to provide them with a transforming experience that will shape their political outlook," said Levin. Priority will be given to proposals that contain the following:

- New organizing or first-contract fights.
- Large-scale organizing (units of 500 or more).
- The ability to host 20 or more Union Summer activists at a time.
- Careful and thorough planning.
- New ideas and risk-taking, including campaigns that involve innovative tactics, multiple unions, whole industries or regions.
- Organizing the "new work force" — low-wage workers, young workers, women, people of color, recent immigrants.
- The ability to host two or three waves of Union Summer activists.
- The willingness to share costs with the AFL-CIO.

To participate, submit proposals or applications by March 15 to Union Summer, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone 1-800/952-2550 or 202/408-0300; FAX 202/408-0303.

Labor welcomes back refortified hospital union

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The AFL-CIO Executive Council welcomed Dennis Rivera and his National Health and Human Service Employees Union back into the house of labor.

"We are proud to add the diversity of our members — most of whom are women, most of whom are people of color — to the most progressive institution in America, dedicated to standing up for working people," Rivera told the council.

The affiliation of the 117,000-member former District 1199 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union brought full circle the saga of what once was the largest union of health care workers. Part of the union merged with AFSCME and another part with the Service Employees back in the 1980s, and Rivera's New York District 1199 broke amicably with RWDSU in 1991.

RWDSU President Lenore Miller hugged Rivera and praised his union, noting that she was proud to walk on their picket lines. "This union has done remarkable things for its workers," she said. "We welcome them back."

The Rev. Martin L. King Jr. once called 1199 his "favorite union," praising its spirit of activism that led to the organizing of more than 150,000 members in 1969, with chapters in 20 states.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Dennis Rivera, president of the National Health and Human Services Employees, is joined at a news conference by RWDSU President Lenore Miller and AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

The Health and Human Services Employees did not come back to labor with empty arms. In fact, Rivera pledged $500,000 towards the AFL-CIO's 1996 election campaign and donated up to 10 staff members to work full time on the effort.

The union's political activism is well known in New York. Jerry Hudson, District 1199's executive vice president, will take a two-year leave of absence to help revitalize the New York State Democratic Party.

Rivera told the council that "we will put our phone banks to work, our organizing skills, our shoe leather, our ability to reach out through the mass media, to talk to the American people, to talk about the importance of sending Newt Gingrich packing, to talk about the importance of keeping Bob Dole in the Senate, as minority leader."

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Electric utility warning

The AFL-CIO urged Congress and state regulatory agencies to take a cautious approach to electric utility deregulation to ensure against destabilizing the industry, threatening jobs and dramatically increasing residential electricity rates.

"Claims of universal benefit associated with fully open competition for electricity supply are exaggerated and not well-founded," the Executive Council said. Radical deregulation of the industry, which employs directly or indirectly more than half a million workers, would result in a write-off of billions of dollars of assets, causing "further pressure for unreasonable downsizing of work forces, thereby threatening safety and reliability of the nation's electric supply system."

"Deregulation will also jeopardize the environmental progress achieved through energy efficiency and demand-side management programs, and reasonable diversity in primary fuel choice for power generation," the federation said.

'Excelleration' arbitration

Some arbitration hearings will become "quick, simple and low-cost" with a new program endorsed by the council.

Developed by the AFL-CIO and the American Arbitration Association together with the Academy of Arbitrators, the Excelleration Arbitration Program will rid unions of the lengthy, complicated, costly and frustrating arbitration process.

The program will "improve the grievance arbitration dispute resolution process to help achieve faster justice on the job and generally improve labor-management relations," the council said in a statement.

Hearings will be scheduled within 15 days of filing with the AAA, and awards will be rendered no later than 24 hours after the hearing.

The traditional features of arbitration, such as transcripts, briefs and extensive opinions, will be waived for the prompt decisions and cost savings. The parties also have designated guidelines for the proceedings; qualifications of neutral arbitrators; date, time and place of hearing; desk arbitration; the form of the award; and administrative fees.

Committees revised

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney announced several changes in Executive Council committee names and structures, appointing new chairs to many of the panels. He also created new committees for working women and for workplace democracy. **(See stories, Pages 1 and 11)**.

The committees and their chairs are: Civil Rights and Human Rights, Stephen P. Yokich, UAW; Community Services, Vincent R. Sombrotto, Letter Carriers; Economic Policy, George Becker, Steelworkers; Education, Albert Shanker, AFT; International Affairs, George J. Kourpias, Machinists; Legislation, Ron Carey, Teamsters; Organizing, Arthur A. Coia, Laborers; Political Education, Gerald W. McEntee, AFSCME; Public Affairs, Douglas H. Dority, Food and Commercial Workers;

Safety and Occupational Health, Lenore Miller, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union; Social Policy, John N. Sturdivant, AFGE; Finance, Richard L. Trumka, AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer; Trade (subcommittee of economic policy), Jay Mazur, UNITE; Strategic Approaches, Trumka; State and Local Central Bodies, Wayne E. Glenn, Paperworkers; Full Participation, Linda Chavez-Thompson, AFL-CIO executive vice president; Workplace Democracy, Morton Bahr, Communications Workers; Committee 2000, John J. Sweeney, AFL-CIO president;

Women Workers, Gloria Johnson, Electronic Workers; Constitutional Review, Carey; Immigration (subcommittee of civil rights and human rights), Arturo S. Rodriguez, Farm Workers; Energy (subcommittee of economic policy), Robert E. Wages, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; Housing (subcommittee of economic policy), John T. Joyce, Bricklayers; Health Care (subcommittee of social policy), Richard W. Cordtz, Service Employees; Article XX Review, Sweeney; Balanced Budget, McEntee; Ethical Practices, James J. Norton, Graphic Communications Union; Older and Retired Members, Mazur; Union Pension Funds, Trumka; and National Information Infrastructure (subcommittee of education), Bahr.

Misguided trade policies scored

Council: Worker rights key missing ingredient

By David Kameras

Failed government policy lies at the heart of the adverse impact international trade is having on the jobs and incomes of American workers, the Executive Council declared at its meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla.

"History tells us that trade unions through collective bargaining and government through adequately enforced labor laws are necessary to ensure that increased trade really does lead to higher standards of living for all workers," the council said.

The Executive Council proposed a number of policies that should be pursued to ease the impact of foreign trade on U.S. workers:

- The United States must insist in all trade negotiations that worker rights provisions, such as the prohibition of forced and child labor, freedom of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, nondiscrimination and rules governing workplace safety, health and appropriate work standards, be included.
- The White House should reiterate its commitment toward creating a working party on international labor standards at a ministerial meeting in Singapore later this year.
- The second Western Hemisphere trade ministerial meeting, to be held in Columbia later this month, must place worker rights and labor standards at the heart of the process for developing the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas.
- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation during an upcoming ministerial meeting in Manila should commit to promoting and recognizing worker rights.
- The administration must fully utilize the worker rights provisions present in existing law.

The federation praised a recent move by the U.S. trade representative to set up a permanent bureau charged with overseeing trade agreements, implementing trade laws and pressuring foreign governments toward compliance, noting that "diligent monitoring and aggressive enforcement . . . are critical steps in the right direction."

Meanwhile, U.S. and Chilean officials continue to talk unofficially about each other's labor laws in anticipation of expansion of the North American Free Trade Agreement to include Chile.

Weakness in NAFTA's labor accords have been blamed for a host of worker rights abuses and threats to U.S. jobs, safety and the environment. Last month, Teamsters President Ron Carey put the union on a "NAFTA highway safety alert" after releasing data prepared by the administration indicating that Mexican trucks are nearly twice as likely as U.S. trucks to be in violation of federal safety standards.

"No one benefits from doubling the hazards on our highways except the corporate special interests," he said.

Representatives of millions of truck drivers and freight workers from the NAFTA countries meet in Chicago March 13 to seek ways to protect jobs, highway safety and the environment, and seek to extend a temporary delay of NAFTA provisions that would allow U.S. trucking companies to shift operations to Mexico.

The AFL-CIO also has lambasted U.S. support of the Chinese government's repression of its own citizens, and called on Congress and the White House to reject renewal of most-favored-nation trading status for China.

At the same time, the federation applauded efforts by President Clinton to deny China membership to the World Trade Organization until it meets appropriate trade and human rights standards.

The council noted that a 1994 executive order conditioned MFN renewal on whether it promoted freedom of emigration, and on China's compliance with a 1992 bilateral agreement regarding the use of prison labor.

In addition, China was to have shown "significant progress" toward adhering to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, releasing and accounting for Chinese citizens imprisoned or detained for nonviolently expressing their political and religious beliefs, ensuring humane treatment of prisoners, protecting Tibet's religious and cultural heritage and permitting radio and TV broadcasts into China.

Although these conditions were not met, MFN status was renewed in 1995 with America's second-largest deficit-trading partner, producing $35 billion of red ink in 1995 alone.



CWA photo

Workers fired by Sprint at La Conexion Familiar when they sought to form a union display a CWA T-shirt at a Labor Department hearing on Mexican charges of failure to enforce U.S. labor laws.

NAFTA hearing exposes Sprint

Workers fired from La Conexion Familiar in 1994 when they sought to form a union painted a horrifying portrait of a workplace where their rights of freedom of association and to union representation were violated.

"I thought if I worked hard, there would be opportunities for me to move ahead," Fernanda Recio said during a Feb. 27 Labor Department hearing in San Francisco. "But soon after my arrival at Sprint, I realized Sprint's public image is very different from its behavior as an employer."

The Sprint case was heard under terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement side provisions, which offer little recourse beyond the hearings. The complaint was brought by the Mexican government at the request of the Mexican telecommunications union, which consulted with the Communications Workers.

Recio described an environment in which workers were short-changed on commissions, had to a sign a report each time they went to the bathroom, were grilled about any union contacts and were told that their facility would be shut down if a union was voted in.

"My experience at Sprint changed everything for me," added Lilliette Jiron, who was asked to spy on co-workers and search their drawers after hours for union materials. "I will always carry around the fear of being fired. I'll remember their threats to close if we voted for the union. And I'll remember the day they did what they said. And to think we only wanted a union."

"Sprint is a company that is willing to do anything to keep the union out," Recio said.

"Sprint's action epitomizes decades of increased attacks by corporations on workers' rights," said CWA President Morton Bahr. The signatories to NAFTA "are in a unique position to tell these companies in no uncertain terms that more trade agreements will never fly unless there are improved protections for workers, their jobs and their rights."

Responding to allegations by CWA and the Mexican government that workers' rights were violated when Sprint Corp. shut down the subsidiary serving Hispanic-Americans shortly before a representation election was scheduled, the Labor Department moved forward with the hearing, the first ever under NAFTA, with the proceedings directed by Deputy Secretary Jack Otero, who is a former vice president of the Transportation Communications Union.

— David Kameras

Nigerian export ban is sought

Human rights award goes to jailed unionist

Bal Harbour, Fla.

The AFL-CIO called for an embargo on all Nigerian exports and recognized one of that country's leading dissidents with the George Meany Human Rights Award.

"Despite increasing international criticism and isolation, the renegade regime of General Sani Abacha continues on a course of widespread violation of the most basic rights of Nigerian citizens," the Executive Council said in a statement. "Violence and illegal arrests continue, much of which has been targeted against the country's trade unions and their leaders."

Among those being held illegally are Frank Kokori, general secretary of Nigeria's natural gas workers' union and the recipient of the 1996 George Meany Human Rights Award.

Kokori was arrested July 4, 1994, for leading his union, the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, on strike in opposition to the military dictatorship. In the two years since he was arrested, no charges have been filed against Kokori, nor has he been allowed legal counsel or contact with his family.

The strike, which was joined by several other unions, halted production in the country's oil fields. Ninety percent of Nigeria's foreign revenue comes from oil exports, with nearly 50 percent of its oil exported to the United States.

Seven trade union leaders were arrested after the strike, and all but Kokori have been released. Milton Dabibi, general secretary of the Nigerian oil and gas workers' union, was arrested last month and also is being held without charge.

After the strike, trade unions were taken over by government-appointed "administrators" who replaced the elected leadership, and trade unionists were harassed and intimidated.

Such actions show that "more effective and forceful measures are urgently needed to force the Abacha regime to stop the violence and torture, restore civil liberties, including an end to arbitrary arrests, and immediately release all political prisoners," the council said.

Specifically, the AFL-CIO called for a complete embargo of all Nigerian exports, with sanctions on nations that refuse to honor the embargo, and an embargo on shipment of equipment and replacement parts to Nigeria.

The federation also backed freezing the foreign bank accounts of Nigeria's rulers and urged U.S. oil companies to "admit their culpability by ceasing their support of the Nigerian military regime that violently abuses human and worker rights to degrade the environment and make massive profits from the blood of its citizens."

In another statement, the council decried Irish Republican Army terrorism in London and called on the Clinton administration to renew its efforts to gain a cease-fire and regain momentum for a peace agreement in Northern Ireland.

— James B. Parks



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Jackson Memorial Hospital workers escort AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney through the halls of the Miami facility at the end of the Executive Council meeting. Sweeney attended a breakfast briefing with hospital CEO Ira Clark, community leaders and local politicians on labor-management partnerships to save the public health safety net. Jackson Memorial, the nation's second-largest hospital, derives nearly half its revenue from Medicare and Medicaid funding to treat the many elderly in Miami.

Schools at risk in voucher fight

Bal Harbour, Fla.

An effort to impose vouchers on the Washington, D.C., school system is a prescription that "undermines the system of public education that working families have fought so hard to obtain," the Executive Council said.

The proposal is part of the federal funding package for the District of Columbia. It would allow some of those funds to support low-income public school students who switch to private schools. The proposal was stopped in the Senate, where supporters twice could not garner enough votes to halt a filibuster.

"School vouchers drain public dollars from public education to fund private schools that do not answer to the public," the AFL-CIO said in a statement.

AFT President Albert Shanker, chair of the AFL-CIO Education Committee, pointed out after the Senate vote rejecting cloture and continuing the filibuster that "parents, teachers and the public want what works — high academic standards and safe and orderly public schools. This is where our efforts should be focused, not on radical schemes that have no evidence of success behind them."

The voucher experiment would cost $5 million, part of the overall $727 million D.C. funding bill for 1996. That is one of five unfinished spending bills that will be included in an omnibus appropriations package expected to be voted on this week. The voucher provision was dropped from the Senate's version.

Proponents of the measure argue that funding private schools to compete with public schools would improve public schools, which are attended by 90 percent of U.S. students.

"We recognize that in many communities, public education needs our urgent attention and support. School voucher schemes, however, take the resources that constructive measures require."

— AFL-CIO Executive Council

But that proposition is undercut by the experience of families in Milwaukee, where vouchers resulted in the abandonment of public schools.

During a three-year period, the voucher system "undercut the common good that public schools serve . . . and brought greater fragmentation" in the community, according to a report cited by the council.

"We recognize that in many communities, public education needs our urgent attention and support," the council said. "School voucher schemes, however, take the resources that constructive measures require."

The council urged "states and communities to reject the diversion from constructive action that vouchers represent."

— Muriel H. Cooper

Labor backs RUGMARK campaign against child labor

Bal Harbour, Fla.

The Executive Council put the AFL-CIO strongly behind the RUGMARK consumer education and purchasing campaign that seeks an end to exploitative child labor in the carpet industry.

"The hand-knotted carpet industry, in particular, is rife with insidious forms of child labor, with bonded children as young as 5 and 6 years old often enslaved to pay off the debts of their parents," the council said.

The campaign is sponsored by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and is being promoted in the United States through the Child Labor Coalition, which includes the AFL-CIO. The RUGMARK is a smiling-face symbol affixed to imported rugs that are determined to be produced without child labor.

"Labor always has been a leader in the fight against child labor," said Darlene Adkins of the CLC. "We are pleased that the Executive Council came out so strongly in favor of eradicating this horrible practice."

Nearly 900,000 children below the age of 14 are working in the carpet industry in Pakistan, 200,000 in Nepal and 300,000 in India. Many of the children work more than eight hours a day and have many physical and emotional injuries directly related to their employment.

"The use of child labor deprives children of their health, education, and in many cases, their very lives," the council stated. "The countries that rely on, or even permit, child labor are not investing in their nations' future. They are propelling the economic race to the bottom in labor standards and worker protections for the world."

Nepal is the first carpet-producing country to establish a program to certify that exported carpets are made free of child labor. Forty of the largest carpet manufacturers there formed the Nepal RUGMARK Foundation, which involves about 70 percent of the total carpet production in Nepal.

India has manufactured 120,000 RUGMARKs for export to Germany, and there are negotiations under way for RUGMARKs to be affixed to Pakistani carpets.

The carpets should be arriving in the United States in the next few weeks. The United States is the world's second-largest market for hand-knotted Oriental carpets, with imports of $172 million in 1993 from India alone.

The CLC already has gained signatures from 14,000 consumers who say they will look for RUGMARKed carpets in the United States.

— Muriel H. Cooper

Change comes dramatically to federation

Unified field services to reach farther, faster

Continued from Page 1

organization of the federation, including a streamlined field services department headed by Marilyn Sneiderman, 39, who has been education director at the Teamsters, and the creation of a new Working Women's Department headed by Karen Nussbaum, 46, who has been director of the Labor Department's Women's Bureau. **(See story below)**.

Other new departments include one for public policy, combining economic research and employee benefits, and one for corporate affairs, with centers for strategic research, collective bargaining and workplace democracy. A new Department of Public Affairs has consolidated AFL-CIO communications in divisions for public relations, speechwriting, electronic media and publications.

Sweeney also appointed new chairs and members on revamped Executive Council committees, creating new committees for Working Women, chaired by Gloria Johnson of the Electronic Workers, and for Workplace Democracy, focusing on issues of work and technology, work organization and the changing role of unions in the workplace, chaired by Morton Bahr of the Communications Workers. **(See story, Page 9)**.

And Sweeney created a Committee 2000, which he will chair, to consider the structure and role of the AFL-CIO and its trade and industrial departments, and how best to integrate the work of the labor movement.

Much of that work must be focused on organizing, "the most important issue facing our movement," Sweeney said. "We cannot bargain decent contracts for our members, nor can we obtain public policies that protect working families unless we can build a substantially larger labor movement."

That prescription was endorsed by House Minority Whip David E. Bonior (D-Mich.), who had asked to come early so he could sit in on the council's organizing discussion. "Your most important campaign today is the campaign to organize more members," he said. "No campaign will go further toward restoring values. No campaign will have more effect on wages and living standards."

The direction and pace of change at the AFL-CIO reflects the extreme economic and societal pressures felt by American working families, and particularly since the fresh assaults by the radical GOP Congress that came to power in November 1994. The federation has gone back to the drawing board with a self-examination that reaches all the way to the grass roots.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Vice President Gore had welcome news for the Executive Council: President Clinton will veto any legislation that undermines job safety and health, including the Kassebaum and Ballenger bills that unions are fighting in the Senate and the House. The announcement drew applause from AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

In a statement, "Informing and Involving Union Members in National Legislative Debates," the council describes the scientific soul-searching that found union members angry and tuning out federal legislation and politics. "There was essentially no understanding of what working people had at stake in the 1994 election," the council said.

Seasons of change

Thus, wage hearings in the spring, youthful activism in the summer and political training for the fall add up to a coordinated campaign of consciousness-raising for union and nonunion workers alike. Much will depend on the extent to which local unions and state and local central bodies are involved, Sweeney said, pointing to the reorganized AFL-CIO field services department as a way to stoke the grass-roots revival.

The field staff from the political department will be folded into the reorganized field services department, and the number of regions will be reduced from 12 to four or five. Field offices will be expanded into nearly every state, with state-level coordinators assigned to work with the state federations.

Weeklong staff training in message and political tactics began March 2 at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies.

"We will operate all our field activities through this new unified system," Sweeney said. "We think that by setting clear priorities and integrating the work of the field staff, we can ensure that the major goals of the federation are furthered in an effective and efficient manner."

At the national level, the federation will seek to improve its effectiveness through strengthened coalitions with allies of the labor movement. After a rally in the hotel by some 600 members of the National Council of Senior Citizens, its executive director, Steve Protulis, proclaimed that "seniors are ready to fight with you for the common good."

At the other end of the family unit, the AFL-CIO will stand with the Children's Defense Fund's on June 1, Stand for Children Day, at the Lincoln Memorial. The council heard an emotional appeal for support from CDF President Marian Wright Edelman

"Children cannot make their voices heard," she said. "That's why we need your help so much. Most poor children are in families where someone is working."

The council also heard a proposal for the labor movement and the women's movement to join forces over the issue of economic justice. "It's about amplifying the message and expanding the reach," said Susan Bianchi-Sand, the former president of the Flight Attendants who now is president of the National Association for Pay Equity.

Other visitors addressing the council were House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.), Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) and Indiana Gov. Evan Bayh (D).

Concerns of working women gaining special attention

By Colleen M. O'Neill

The AFL-CIO will reach out to working women through a new headquarters department and a new committee of the Executive Council, President John J. Sweeney told the council during its winter meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla.

Sweeney named Karen Nussbaum, director of the Labor Department's Women's Bureau, to head the new Working Women's Department, and Electronic Workers Vice President Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, to chair the new Committee on Women Workers.

Introducing Nussbaum at a news conference, Sweeney said he has charged her "with developing a program that will inject the issues and concerns of working women into every nook and cranny of our movement and with making the labor movement a strong, activist voice for working women."

"We need to focus much more on the needs of working women, building on the great work of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, to make the statement to working women that the labor movement is there for them, that we understand their needs and their concerns," he said.

Nussbaum founded 9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women, in 1973, and in 1981 became president of District 925 of the Service Employees, serving on the union's executive board and leading its 170,000-member Office Workers Division.

Sweeney and Nussbaum said the department would work closely with the legislative, political and organizing departments to ensure representation of the interests of working women.

Nearly half the work force now is made up of women, who earn on average only about 72 percent of what men earn. Despite their low earnings and poor working conditions, they are among the least unionized sector of the work force.

Nussbaum recalled meeting women while touring the country as director of the Women's Bureau and thinking, as she was listening to their workplace problems, that "these women shouldn't be talking to me. They should be talking to a union organizer."

"Women need unions now more than ever," Johnson said, "and they can give the labor movement a huge boost, as well."

Besides Johnson, the Committee on Women Workers will include Vice Presidents Clayola Brown, UNITE; Ron Carey, Teamsters; Richard W. Cordtz, Service Employees; Carolyn Forrest, UAW; Patricia Friend, Flight Attendants; Robert A. Georgine, Building and Construction Trades Department; Edward T. Hanley, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees; Sumi Haru, Screen Actors Guild; Douglas McCarron, Carpenters; Lenore Miller, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union; and Alfred K. Whitehead, Fire Fighters.

That committee also will consider a proposal to forge stronger bonds between the labor movement and the women's movement, a proposition brought to the council by former AFA President Susan Bianchi-Sand, now executive director of the National Association of Pay Equity and chair of the council of presidents of national women's organizations, which counts CLUW among its 113 member organizations.

"Women are ready to help," Bianchi-Sand told the council. "Economic issues are front and center, and women know those issues and workplace problems.

"There's an enormous overlap between the agendas of the women's movement and the labor movement," she said. "I'd like to suggest that we spend some time together exchanging information."

BARGAINING

UNITE in Signal accord

Some 600 UNITE members at Allied Signal's Safety Restraint System in Knoxville, Tenn., ratified a three-year contract that provides a 12 percent increase in wages and benefits, nearly twice the national average.

The contract includes a wage increase ranging from 75 cents to $1.25 an hour, with employees at the lowest rate receiving the higher increase. In addition, workers will receive a ratification bonus of $500.

"Allied Signal is growing, the auto parts industry is growing, and union workers' wages and benefits are growing right along with them," said UNITE Executive Vice President Bruce Raynor, who directs the southern region for the union.

The agreement calls for health benefits to remain unchanged. It also calls for added vacation benefits, an improved pension plan, a new 401(k) plan and a tuition reimbursement plan.

IBEW, L.I. Lighting agree

Members of Electrical Workers Locals 1049 and 1381 ratified parallel five-year contracts with Long Island Lighting Co. that raises wages by 15.5 percent.

The contracts cover some 4,000 physical classification, clerical and office employees. The wages will rise 2 percent immediately, followed in the subsequent years by adjustments every six months, with an increase of 2 percent each February and 1 percent each August. Premiums for Sunday work and second- and third-shift work also will increase.

Both sides agreed to establish a joint committee to explore creating a managed care dental program as a way to hold down medical costs.

IUE gains Whirlpool pact

Some 3,800 Electronic Workers at Whirlpool's plant in Evansville, Ind., will receive a $1.65-per-hour pay raise over the next four years after ratifying a new contract.

An initial increase of 45 cents was effective immediately, with raises of 45 cents, 40 cents and 35 cents in each of the next three years. Employees in skilled trades will receive additional adjustments ranging from 30 cents to 50 cents over term.

The company agreed to absorb any cost increase in the health benefits plan over the first two years and to pay 75 percent of increases in the last two years.

The union, IUE Local 808, also agreed to an early retirement option plan as a way to reduce the work force without layoffs. The plant, which makes refrigerators, expects to drop one of its product lines this year, with the probable loss of 250 jobs.

Sikorsky wages take off

Hourly workers at Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford, Conn., will receive a $500 signing bonus and a 3.5 percent wage increase in the first year of a three-year contract ratified Feb. 18.

The 4,700 workers covered by the accord also will receive increases of 3 percent and 2.5 percent each in the following years. Teamsters Local 1150 represents the employees in 87 job classifications at the plant, which produces helicopters.

In addition, employees will be able to bid on future job openings on a seniority basis under new work rules in the contract. The pact also shifts health care coverage to a managed care plan and introduces co-payments for care.

Picket lines bring contract

Settlement was reached between some 50 Machinists and Ingalls Shipbuilding Inc. in Pascagoula, Miss., shortly after almost 8,000 unionists honored picket lines erected by IAM Local 1133.

Those lines held firm even though other unions — including nine bargaining groups belonging to the metal trades council — had voted to continue working under extensions after rejecting management's contract offers.

IAM District 73 Business Representative Russell Kelly said the worker solidarity helped to achieve an agreement featuring bonuses, pay on the time card and a much-improved health insurance program.

Unions step up Beverly efforts

By Muriel H. Cooper

The Food and Commercial Workers and the Service Employees have joined forces to fight for improved patient care conditions at Beverly Enterprises nursing homes.

Workers from 23 Pennsylvania and Connecticut Beverly homes traveled recently to Alabama and Georgia to rally with fellow workers at the southern facilities. A report released Feb. 26 by UFCW Local 1657 cited Beverly for 416 patient care violations in Alabama over a three-year period. Three of the homes received "Level A" citations for frequent and serious violations of the quality of care they deliver to patients.

Beverly also has a history of labor law violations. A Government Accounting Office report in 1995 called the nursing home operator "the nation's leading labor law violator among 14 federal contractors."

"Nursing home workers are the caregivers — they feed and bathe the patients, they ease the pain and bring relief to the suffering," said UFCW President Douglas H. Dority. "For caregivers, the quality of care is the No. 1 issue in collective bargaining."

The Alabama local presented a proposal to the company that would improve the quality of care not only at the eight Beverly-owned homes in the state, but throughout the country.

The proposal asks Beverly to increase staffing levels; create a committee on patient care with caregivers working with management to assess patient needs and staffing levels; provide employee training on patient care skills, as well as patient rights, public health regulations, disability rights and other issues; create a committee on health and safety with workers helping to reduce on-the-job injuries; and maintain high standards of workplace cleanliness, ventilation and safety in general.

"Alabama is the kickoff point for a nationally coordinated effort to improve patient care standards in the nursing home industry," said George Seidenfeden, Local 1657 president.

A similar list was presented by the SEIU in contract language at Beverly's Georgia, Pennsylvania and Connecticut homes, but the company has rejected the union proposals.

"The appalling pattern of violations that exist in Beverly homes nationwide raises questions for residents and their family members about Beverly Enterprises' ability to provide even basic care; and for taxpayers, who provide nearly 80 percent of its revenues (through Medicare and Medicaid), as to whether they're getting what they pay for," said SEIU President Richard W. Cordtz.

The Beverly workers in Alabama and Georgia voted to strike if necessary to improve patient care for the residents. Workers at 20 facilities in Pennsylvania will decide in the next couple of weeks their response to an ongoing pattern of what they view as unfair labor practices by the company. In Connecticut, contracts have been extended through March 15.

UNITE opens Miami nursing home drive

UNITE has launched a massive effort to organize 10,000 nursing home workers in South Florida.

Unveiling a five-foot-tall Nursing Home Workers' Bill of Rights in Miami on March 4, workers were joined by religious and community leaders, including Rep. Carrie Mack (D-Fla.), in calling for dignity and respect for workers throughout the industry.

Florida nursing home workers are mainly Haitian, Jamaican, African-American and Latino women averaging $5 a hour with no benefits, inadequate patient training and staffing.

"I try to give the best care possible to my residents — they're like family," said Francina Sheffield, a certified nursing assistant who spoke at the news conference. "There isn't enough staff to provide quality care."

The bill of rights calls for a living wage, an end to discrimination of all forms, more staffing to ensure proper care, a workplace free of risk from crippling back injuries and other health hazards, affordable family health insurance and a decent pension, the right to organize and bargain collectively and recognition that nursing home workers provide professional services essential to the well-being of society and humanity.

Workers presented charts comparing their $13,500 annual salaries with that of W. Andrew Adams, president and chief executive officer of two major health care corporations. Adams made more than $1 million last year.

Workers fight Kaiser for contracts

By Colleen M. O'Neill

It's tough going these days for union members working at Kaiser Permanente's West Coast facilities. Open contracts and contentious bargaining abound amidst continuing reports of layoffs, closings and geographical shifts.

Kaiser said it may close its Oakland in-patient section and form alliances with three area hospitals to take those patients. Some 2,200 employees — including about 535 represented by the California Nurses Association and more than 1,000 represented by the Service Employees — could be affected by the proposed changes.

The arrangement would be similar to those already in place in the Northwest, Hawaii and California's Central Valley, the company said.

SEIU Local 250 in Northern California has been without a contract since October 1995. Other locals representing Kaiser workers with open contracts include Office and Professional Employees Local 29, MEBA/Engineers and Scientists of California and SEIU Local 535.

AFT Local 5017 in Oregon just opened bargaining, while Steelworkers Local 7600, with some 2,600 technical, clerical, patient care, equipment services and service and maintenance employees, just reached settlement on a pact with Kaiser. They had rejected a "last, best and final offer" from the company Jan. 8.

Meanwhile, bargaining for a new contract opened Feb. 14 for some 12,000 workers represented SEIU Local 399 at Los Angeles-area Kaiser facilities. The issue of closings and partial closings is one the union will carefully watch, an SEIU official said. The contract expires March 31.

On Feb. 8, Kaiser Permanente Southern California Region announced the company is considering wholesale restructuring of the delivery of inpatient care, including reducing or eliminating inpatient capacities at several medical centers and sending Kaiser patients to non-Kaiser facilities.

The recent announcement "comes as no surprise to the United Nurses Association of California or to thousands of dedicated Kaiser employees," said Kathy J. Sackman, UNAC president and a vice president of AFSCME.

"The dwindling patient load experienced by many Kaiser facilities has less to do with medical advances than with a growing reluctance by the company to admit patients," she said. "The bottom line is that in-patient care is costly.

"In announcing this move, Kaiser does not address — in fact, blatantly ignores — the impact their plans will have on the thousands of hospital staff who will be displaced," she said.

Some 4,000 AFSCME-represented registered nurses, RN practitioners and physician's assistants on Jan. 17 approved a five-year agreement at nine Kaiser facilities in Southern California.

That contract provides that there will be no mandatory layoff of nurses in the event of a change in the staffing mix. However, nurses could be sent to another Kaiser facility or placed in an on-call pool.

The AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department has been working with nine unions representing Kaiser workers for nearly a year on strategy and coordination. Those unions are SEIU, AFSCME, USWA, MEBA/Engineers and Scientists of California, OPEIU, Food and Commercial Workers, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and AFT.

COURTS

ILA cleared on boycott

The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hold the Longshoremen responsible for a threatened 1990 boycott by Japanese unions against two Florida stevedoring companies.

The justices let stand a lower court ruling in Canaveral Port Authority vs. ILA that the union was not legally liable for the actions of any Japanese union. Two nonunion Florida companies — Coastal Stevedoring in Fort Pierce and Port Canaveral Stevedoring in Cape Canaveral — filed charges of unfair labor practices against the ILA in late 1990, alleging that the union had engaged in an unlawful secondary boycott.

After an ILA request for help, Japanese unions representing dock workers informed companies in 1990 that their members would not unload fruit that had been loaded with nonunion labor, resulting in the two companies losing business.

The National Labor Relations Board ruled the ILA, acting through the Japanese unions, had engaged in illegal conduct. But the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia refused to enforce the board's decision.

Frontier pays $1.5 million

Under orders from a federal court, the Frontier Hotel and Casino paid more than $1.5 million to the pension fund for workers who have been on strike for almost five years.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit in September 1995 ruled the hotel illegally stopped making contributions to the Southern Nevada Culinary Workers and Bartenders Pension Fund in June 1990 and ordered management to reinstitute the pension plan and to make back payments.

The court also ordered the hotel to rescind disciplinary findings on any employee resulting from some 64 unilaterally imposed work rules and to reinstate with back pay anyone discharged or suspended because of the rules. Union attorneys suggested the company could owe some $50-60 million in back pay.

About 500 culinary workers and bartenders have been out since September 1991 in what the NLRB has declared is an unfair labor practices strike.

Displaced worker law upheld

The Supreme Court refused to hear a challenge to the District of Columbia's ordinance requiring certain contractors to hire their predecessors' employees for at least 90 days.

The Displaced Workers Protection Act covers contractors with 25 or more employees that perform food, janitorial, building maintenance and health care services. The ordinance was designed to protect the jobs of employees when a service contract changes hands.

If a contractor assumes a service contract and performs the same type of service, under the law, it must keep all the previous contractor's employees who have been on the job for eight months or more. At the end of 90 days, the employer must evaluate the employees and retain those with a satisfactory or better rating. Employees can be fired for cause during the 90 days.

A federal district judge overturned the ordinance, but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia reversed the ruling. The case is Washington Service Contractors Coalition vs. District of Columbia.

Arbitration cost-shift denied

The U.S. Supreme Court left intact a lower court ruling that the costs of arbitration cannot be passed to the employee.

The case, Fischbach & Moore vs. Moore, began with a provision in the 1988 contract between Electrical Workers Local 569 and Fischbach & Moore, a San Diego electrical contractor, that was designed to prevent bad-faith litigation by passing the cost of arbitration to the loser. When Lawrence Moore, an employee, lost a grievance, an arbitration committee required him to pay $224,000 in attorney fees for the employer.

In its May 1995 ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit invalidated the provision and ruled that shifting the fee to employees violates the Landrum-Griffin Act's "bill of rights," which protects a union member's right to seek relief from courts and agencies.

The appeals court said the fee-shifting chilled employees' right to contest the results of a grievance.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez, at a news conference during a break in the Executive Council meeting in Florida, outlines the union's case against a proposal to increase the number of foreign workers brought in for agricultural work. At left is AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

UFW rejects foreign worker plan

Bal Harbour, Fla.

The Farm Workers announced plans to fight legislation that would increase the number of foreigners imported for agricultural work when unemployment already is high among farm workers.

UFW President Arturo S. Rodriguez told reporters at a news conference that the union is working in coalition with other groups to oppose the legislation, which has been introduced by Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-Calif.). He also discussed a suit filed suit against Running W Citrus Limited Partnership for violation of federal law.

"The Gallegly proposal would be devastating to the already inadequate wages and working conditions of U.S. farm workers, who are suffering from a chronic oversupply of labor and lax labor law enforcement," Rodriguez said. "It flies in the face of a unanimous recommendation by the bipartisan Commission on Immigration Reform, chaired by the late Barbara Jordan, which strenuously opposed any new guest worker program in agriculture."

More than 30 organizations sent a letter to members of the Florida congressional delegation opposing Gallegly's amendment to enlarge the foreign worker program. Groups signing onto the letter included the AFL-CIO, Florida Impact, the Florida Farm Worker Association and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee.

The coalition cited a "dear colleague" letter from Gallegly to House Speaker Newt Gingrich stating that major Florida agribusiness interests, including the Florida Farm Bureau, support the amendment.

In a letter to House members, AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor pointed out that the current H-2A agricultural program is designed to protect jobs, wages and working conditions of domestic farm workers, as well as to protect the rights and dignity of those who are admitted to work on a temporary or seasonal basis.

"No such protections are afforded to the domestic worker or the so-called guest worker under the Gallegly proposal," she said. The House Agriculture Committee added the guest worker amendment to a broader immigration bill approved by the panel March 5.

The UFW lawsuit charges that Running W violated the federal Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Protection Act by failing to comply with its working arrangement with the workers, and by providing false and misleading information regarding the terms and conditions of employment.

Running W, a limited partnership created by the King Ranch of Texas, bought approximately 16,000 acres of groves from Coca-Cola in 1993. The more than 600 Coca-Cola workers had been employed under a union contract with the UFW since 1972.

Rodriguez said Running W reneged on a promise to continue paying workers at the same rate, discontinuing the wage adjustment on the number of tubs workers filled. In addition, workers are now required to "heap up" or "round off" the tub so that workers actually would pick 11 to 12 boxes but only get paid for 10 boxes, which violates federal law.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

Labor to fight for affirmative action

Labor and civil rights groups are gearing up for mass national grass-roots action to defeat efforts in many states to eliminate affirmative action.

The biggest test will be in California, where Republican Gov. Pete Wilson led the effort to get an initiative to end affirmative action on the November ballot. The initiative is expected to be a key issue in the state's GOP primary March 26.

At the winter meeting of the Executive Council, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney urged affiliates to lend resources and people to grass-roots coalitions being formed in California to fight the initiative.

Speaking at the Rainbow Coalition's national conference in Chicago March 1, Sweeney tied affirmative action to labor's efforts for a more just workplace. "The fight about affirmative action is more than a struggle to sustain a program that has put billions of richly deserved dollars into the pockets of women and minorities who have been systematically cheated out of decent wages," he said.

"It's about whether the federal government should play a role in setting wage standards to protect workers from the unbridled greed of monopolistic multinational employers," he said.

"If affirmative action goes down, Davis Bacon, the Service Contract Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act and the minimum wage bill will all follow," Sweeney said.

Sweeney vowed to work with the Rainbow Coalition and its president, the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, to defeat corporate greed and the extremists who have gained control of Congress. Working America's biggest problems can be solved through "a larger, stronger, wiser labor movement and a revived civil rights movement," he said.

A preview of the national fight for affirmative action was on display Feb. 24 in front of Louisiana's Capitol, where trade unionists were among hundreds of demonstrators from across the state protesting Gov. Mike Foster's executive order eliminating affirmative action rules.

Foster's order is "cynical and disingenuous" and "the foolish act of a man living in a dream world," AFL-CIO Civil Rights Director Richard Womack told the crowd. "It makes no sense until the playing field is level, and right now it's all uphill for women and minorities."

— James B. Parks

Real earnings continue free fall

By David Kameras

Average real weekly earnings took another nosedive in January, falling 1.7 percent for the month. Earnings adjusted for inflation have fallen 2.2 percent from a year ago and 15.7 percent since January 1979.

In addition to stagnant wages, the latest erosion in workers' buying power was caused by severe winter weather in the East, a 1.7 percent reduction in average weekly hours worked and a 0.4 percent increase in consumer prices (CPI-W).

The main price increases were led by fuel oil and gasoline. But even with food and energy excluded, prices rose 0.3 percent, compared with 0.1 percent in December, with clothing jumping 0.7 percent and used cars 0.9 percent.

At the producer level, finished goods prices rose 0.3 percent in January, half the rate of the preceding month, mainly reflecting a 13.3 percent jump in gasoline. However, "without food and energy, there was an actual decline of 0.1 percent," said AFL-CIO chief economist Rudy Oswald. "Except for energy, there was little if any evidence of inflation."

There appears to be a disconnect between economic performance and compensation. The Conference Board reports that its composite index of leading indicators rose 0.2 percent in December.

But the downward pressure on wages has been evident in major collective bargaining agreements covering at least 1,000 workers, which in 1995 averaged 2.5 percent increases, compared with 3 percent in the contracts they replaced. At the end of the year, cost-of-living-adjustment provisions applied to 22 percent of the affected workers, down from about 40 percent in the late 1980s.

Also pushing down wages is the persistent merchandise trade deficit, which hit a new record last year at $159.6 billion, up from $150.6 billion in 1994 and the fourth straight year of erosion.

The red ink "is a significant drag on U.S. economic growth, and contributes to declining real wages and to the loss of manufacturing jobs," said AFL-CIO economist Greg Woodhead. "It is critical that U.S. government trade policy produce balanced results."

Meanwhile, productivity in the third quarter of 1995 rose 5.7 percent in manufacturing, 6.6 percent in durable goods alone, suggesting that company executives are more inclined to pocket their profits than reward their employees.

With the reappointment of Alan Greenspan as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, economists who claim that job-creating low interest rates spark unacceptable inflation will continue to be in vogue.

And management continues to show its contempt for workers by shutting down often profitable operations to gain short-term Wall Street approval and boost executive compensation.

AT&T reaped a firestorm of bad press and a sullied image after it was revealed that its chairman, Robert E. Allen, is being compensated to the tune of $5.2 million plus $11 million worth of stock options at the same time that his company is throwing 40,000 workers out on the street.

Certainly, he's not being rewarded for his performance. On his watch, AT&T's stock price merely matched that of the S&P 500, and he led the company to lose a bundle on an ill-conceived sally into computers. "Is it fair?" he asked. "Hell, I don't know. I don't make the rules."

One company taking a more enlightened approach is Ameritech, which is staffing its first long-distance office in downtown Milwaukee by emphasizing the hiring of minority workers.

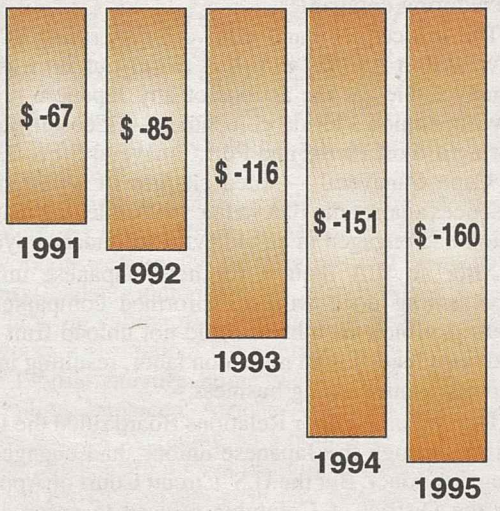
"This decision by Ameritech is an indication that they are interested in using the terms of the Telecommunications Act to create jobs," said Ann L. Crump, president of Communications Workers Local 4600, which will represent as many as 30 operators at the facility. The company has "made extraordinary efforts to reach out to the minority population to help end the shortage of family-supporting jobs."

"Unfortunately, in the telecommunications industry, this is a real 'man bites dog' story," Crump said. "We are quick to criticize any employer who follows the pack by downsizing and cutting jobs. Likewise, we believe we should encourage and give credit to employers who do the right thing."

ECONOMY

U.S. Trade Deficit

All goods in billions of U.S. dollars
(Census basis)



Source: Department of Commerce

Merchandise Trade Deficit	
December '95	$8.4 billion
1995	$159.6 billion
Real Earnings	
January	-1.7 percent
Jan. '95-Jan. '96	-2.2 percent
Since Jan. '79	-15.7 percent
Consumer Prices (CPI-W)	
January	+0.4 percent
December	+0.2 percent
Producer Prices (Finished Goods)	
January	+0.3 percent
December	+0.6 percent

AFL-CIO NEWSGRAFIC

AFL-CIO blasts Federal Reserve, Greenspan policy

Bal Harbour, Fla.

The AFL-CIO sharply criticized the Federal Reserve Board and its chairman, Alan Greenspan, for sacrificing job opportunities in its single-minded effort to halt a nonexistent inflation problem.

Although the 1978 Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act mandates that all practicable means be used to promote maximum employment, production and purchasing power, "the Fed has acted as if a reduction in unemployment below 6 percent is a major threat to inflation and the economy," the Executive Council charged.

Greenspan also was criticized for moving to tinker with the Consumer Price Index, the government's leading measure of inflation, undermining "the security of millions of retirees and Social Security recipients who depend on the CPI for indexation of their benefits," the AFL-CIO said.

"If this effort succeeds, working men and women will suffer as well. A reduced CPI will lead many employers to further restrict wage increases while triggering a back-door tax increase for the American people."

Greenspan, who later in the week was reappointed by President Clinton, also came under fire in the council meeting with Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

"We're not real champions of Alan Greenspan," Steelworkers President George Becker told Rubin. "Whenever the unemployment rate gets below 6 percent, he gets nervous, than raises interest rates."

Higher rates stop growth and plant expansions, make housing less affordable, transfer wealth from working and middle-class people to financial institutions and cost jobs, he said. "Any system that requires a large reservoir of unemployed people is fundamentally flawed," Becker said.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, flanked by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and President John J. Sweeney, tells the Executive Council that he believes there is no reason to fear a rise in inflation because of an unemployment rate below 6 percent. Rubin welcomed a continued dialogue with labor.

Rubin refused to comment on the Fed, which is independent of government control, but conceded that fears of inflation prompted by the unemployment rate dropping below 6 percent largely were unfounded. "My own view," based on the experience of the last few years, is "that is not the case," he said.

Rubin, the first secretary of the treasury to meet with the Executive Council, said he welcomed a continuing dialogue with labor leaders. "It will be most helpful for us to know what's on your minds as we deal with economic policy," he said.

The council praised Rubin for his skill at holding off Republican budget cutters, but warned that further efforts to negotiate trade agreements without provisions for worker rights would outrage American workers.

"Most Americans believe that the North American Free Trade Agreement has been a disaster," UNITE President Jay Mazur told Rubin. "We would certainly oppose any attempt to extend NAFTA parity to the Caribbean Basin Initiative, for example, or other trade initiatives that threaten jobs."

In its statement, the council noted that Felix Rohatyn, a pro-growth advocate originally favored by President Clinton as vice chairman of the Fed, withdrew his name in the face of Republican opposition in the Senate. The AFL-CIO said Clinton should appoint men and women like Rohatyn, "who believe the Federal Reserve should promote full employment and economic growth as well as price stability."

Along with Greenspan, Clinton appointed Alice Rivlin, his budget director, as vice chairman of the Fed, and St. Louis economic forecaster Laurence Meyer to fill a third vacancy on the board. None are considered in Rohatyn's class as pro-growth advocates, but all are expected to win Senate confirmation.

— David Kameras

UNION NEWS

Long time coming for ILA

New York Harbor employees of Moran Towing and Transportation Co. have won $5.4 million in back pay for 208 workers and $224,000 in reimbursable expenses to their union, the ILA's Local 333, United Marine Division, eight years after they were locked out by management.

An impasse had been reached then when the company tried to impose a tighter definition of the established bargaining unit. After the lockout, the union rejected the offer and called a strike. They later were ordered back to work, but management failed to meet the court's mandate to recruit through the union's hiring hall. Civil contempt charges still are pending against the company.

The agreement specifies that reinstatement be offered to 79 former workers who have not yet returned to work, and brings to nearly $13 million the amount of back pay the National Labor Relations Board has helped secure from the various marine transportation firms for 662 employees, as well as reinstatement offers for 370 former strikers.

UPIU pickets Trailmobile

Paperworkers set up picket lines last month at the Chicago headquarters of Trailmobile Corp., which has locked out some 1,200 workers at its Charleston, Ill., plant.

"We're here to show Trailmobile CEO Edward Wanandi that we are going to be on his case until he ends this immoral lockout and gives us a fair contract," said UPIU Local 7591 President Gary Collins. "We're in the picture to stay until that happens."

Joining the workers were activists from the East Timor Action Network protesting the continued occupation of the island nation of East Timor by the military government of Indonesia. The Wanandi family, whose conglomerate owns Trailmobile, has had long-standing ties to Indonesia's military.

Nursing home walkout

More than 1,000 Service Employees from 11 nursing homes in West Virginia walked off their jobs March 4 in a statewide one-day strike against the nursing home industry in West Virginia.

The nursing home workers also rallied at the state Capitol to protest inaction on legislation that would increase wages and staffing levels for nursing home workers. Nursing home workers in West Virginia are among the lowest paid in the country, making between $4.25 and $5.65 an hour.

Caution on privatization

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson joined Minnesota trade unionists in cautioning the University of Minnesota and Fairview Health Systems on plans to merge and privatize services.

"Privatization is not the answer. Accountability is the answer," Chavez-Thompson told reporters at a Feb. 9 news conference at the state capitol.

Workers at those facilities are represented by AFSCME Local 1164, Service Employees Local 113, Teamsters Local 320 and the Minnesota Nurses Association.

'Horrible' bombings trial for peacemakers

The AFL-CIO expressed deep sympathies to the nation of Israel over the deaths caused by four horrible terrorist bombings in nine days.

Although this is a time for mourning, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said in a statement, crucial political decisions must be made to ensure that radical extremists not be allowed to "hijack the hope for peace that millions long for and for which so many, including (former Prime Minister) Yitzhak Rabin, gave their lives."

"It's difficult to see it on a day like this," Sweeney said, "but history ultimately is on the side of the peacemakers. Unfortunately, the road to peace in the Middle East is a rough one that requires those of us who believe in it to struggle and fight to bring it about. Let us pray that day will come soon."



Photo by Gary Schoichet

Hillary Rodham Clinton stitched the first union label into a garment made by UNITE workers at a Nicole Miller fashions shop in New York City. UNITE President Jay Mazur, right, and shop steward Suzy Freites watch the first lady's handiwork, while Soon Ja Chang works at left. Clinton was following in the footsteps of Eleanor Roosevelt, who in 1933 sewed the first union label of the Ladies' Garment Workers into a coat as part of the National Recovery Act. UNITE was created by a merger of ILGWU and the Clothing and Textile Workers. "The label says that the garment was made in this country by workers receiving a living wage," said Mazur. "The Clintons have embraced the message of the UNITE label and we applaud Nicole Miller, whose outstanding designs are made here in this country by UNITE workers. I am proud to be partners with each of them." About 100 million articles of apparel bearing the new union's label will be produced each year, Mazur said.

NEWSMAKERS

Karen Nussbaum has been named to head a new Working Women's Department and **Marilyn Sneiderman** will head a reorganized Field Services Department, AFL-CIO President **John J. Sweeney** told the Executive Council in announcing the first steps in a major reorganization at AFL-CIO headquarters **(See stories, Pages 1 and 11)**.

Nussbaum, 46, was executive director of 9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women, and was president of District 925 of the Service Employees before being named by President Clinton to head the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor in 1993.

Sneiderman, 39, who has been education director of the Teamsters since 1994, was an activist for AFSCME and the South Central (Wis.) AFL-CIO before joining the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, where she helped to develop materials for state and local AFL-CIOs.

Sweeney also appointed **Michael Byrne**, 47, editor of the AFL-CIO News since 1989, to be deputy director for publications, and **Richard Foster**, 45, assistant director of the former Labor Institute of Public Affairs, to be deputy director for electronic media in the new consolidated AFL-CIO Department of Public Affairs. The department, headed by Sweeney assistant **Denise Mitchell**, also includes divisions for media relations and speechwriting.

David Silberman, a former president of Union Privilege and director of the AFL-CIO task force on labor law, has left the federation to join the Washington law firm of Bredhoff and Kaiser, where he will continue to work with the federation and its unions, Sweeney told the Executive Council.

Candice Johnson, former AFL-CIO press secretary, has joined the Communications Workers as associate director of communications. Johnson, who also was an assistant editor of the AFL-CIO News, began her union career as an organizer for the Ladies' Garment Workers, now part of UNITE.

AWARDS

The Executive Council honored Sen. **Edward M. Kennedy** (D-Mass.) for the AFL-CIO award for community service and good citizenship. The council also voted to add the name of President Emeritus **Lane Kirkland** to the Murray/Green/Meany/Kirkland Award.

Members of Fire Fighters Local 1524 received the Joady Award from the Film Arts Foundation for their heroic efforts during the Oklahoma City federal building bombing. **Jack F. Henning**, who has announced his retirement this year as executive secretary-treasurer of the California AFL-CIO, also was honored for his support of "We Do the Work," a public television series documenting working life across the country.



Karen Nussbaum



Marilyn Sneiderman

DEATHS

James M. Wood, executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles AFL-CIO, died of cancer Feb. 19. He was 50.

Wood began his union career with the Communications Workers, working on several voter registration campaigns. He joined the AFL-CIO staff in 1974 as assistant director for the Committee on Political Education. In 1986, Wood was appointed assistant secretary-treasurer by Bill Robertson and succeeded him as executive secretary-treasurer in 1993.

He is survived by his wife, Janice Wood, who is a vice president for CWA.

Sophia G. Reuther, a former labor organizer and wife of UAW co-founder Victor Reuther, died after a heart attack in Florida. She was 82.

Reuther, a native of Middleboro, Mass., was active in the labor movement throughout much of her life, helping to raise strike benefits for striking shipyard workers and for a strike at a General Motors plant. With her husband and his brother, Walter, she helped build a strong political base for the union.

"She felt a kinship with the suffering of all people," said her husband in tribute.

She is survived by her husband, three children, a brother and six grandchildren.

CORRECTION

The voting record of Rep. Steven C. LaTourette (R-Ohio) was omitted from the Feb. 19 Report on Congress. LaTourette voted "right" 3 times and "wrong" 9 times in 1995, his first term, giving him a 25 percent voting record.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper



David Bacon/Impact Visuals

Jack Henning of the California AFL-CIO leads a march to protest Gov. Wilson's attack on prevailing wages.

Wage issue is rallying point

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Trade unionists are mobilizing up and down the nation's West Coast to help turn back state initiatives that would undercut policies that help working families.

More than 30,000 trade unionists gathered in rallies in Los Angeles and Sacramento to protest GOP Gov. Pete Wilson's proposal to gut the state's 65-year-old prevailing wage law.

During a Feb. 26 rally in Los Angeles, some 20,000 union construction workers and their supporters took the day off to rally in front of the state office building prior to the state Department of Industrial Relations' hearings on the governor's plan. In Sacramento, as state legislators filed into the capitol for the opening session, more than 12,000 workers rallied on Valentine's Day with posters saying "Have a Heart, Pete."

Meanwhile, a phalanx of union members 10,000 strong gathered the following week in Olympia, Wash., on the steps of that state's capitol to bring emphasis to the message that workers and working families count.

"The Republicans took control of the House for the first time in 12 years in 1994," said Washington AFL-CIO President Rick Bender. "Things are not getting better, brothers and sisters. They are getting worse."

The Feb. 19 rally was called to draw attention to Republican attempts to gut worker safety, increase the wage gap, eliminate the prevailing wage and to allow school-aged children to work up to 10 hours a day.

"I feel like we need to bring back Charles Dickens when I look at the legislation they want to pass," Gov. Mike Lowry (D) told the workers. "Prevailing wage means that people get paid for the work they do. Every family ought to be able to make a living wage." U.S. Sen. Patty Murray (D), state Sen. Nita Rinehart, Rep. Jim McDermott (D) and state Rep. Steve Conway, who is a union organizer, also addressed the rally.

Prevailing wage was the hot issue to the south as well. "The fundamental issue here is an honest day's pay for an honest day's work," Robert Balgenorth, California Building and Construction Trades Council president, told workers. "They want to replace that with the survival of the cheapest.

"That's bad for middle-class construction worker families and everyone who uses California's roads, bridges, freeways and public buildings," he said. "It will result in skilled workers being replaced by unskilled workers, especially undocumented workers who take cash and don't even pay income tax."

Wilson is pursuing the new prevailing-wage formula administratively, with public hearings followed by a ruling from the Wilson-appointed Industrial Welfare Commission. New wage rates could kick in by July. Prevailing wages are determined by using the wage that a majority of workers earn for a particular skill within the area where a project is planned. Wilson's proposal would include all workers.

Robert A. Georgine, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, lambasted Wilson's DIR, saying the department is "extremely biased in favor of nonunion contractors. . . under the guise of reform."

Unions reject Wilson's argument that a change in the prevailing wage would save the state $200 million, arguing that the 3 percent to 4 percent savings in projects would be more than offset by a decrease in income and sales tax revenue and the inevitable shifting of health care costs from private insurers to Medi-Cal and county hospitals.



Jim Levitt/Impact Visuals

Rain didn't stop 10,000 people from a Rally for Working Families in Olympia, Wash.

Gutting California's 65-year-old law would further widen the door for construction companies to "hire undocumented and out-of-state workers and exploit them with low wages and no benefits," Jack F. Henning, California AFL-CIO executive secretary-treasurer, told the workers.

At the hearing, union members told DIR officials that workers hurt on state projects were liable to end up in county hospitals at the taxpayers' expense because so many of them would have no health insurance. Contractors corroborated this point by explaining they pay for health, pension and other benefits.

Construction workers in California, now currently earning $28,000 per year, would see their pay slashed to $22,000 if new regulations are implemented.

A recent Federal Highway Administration study comparing high-wage and low-wage states found that California is among the most cost-efficient states in freeway construction.

The rebuilding of the Santa Monica Freeway, which was completed just 66 days after the Northridge earthquake, was completed ahead of schedule and under budget, pointed out C.C. Meyers, whose company contracted to work on the bridge and who adamantly opposes the governor's change in prevailing wage laws.

"Lower wages don't mean lower costs," he said. "Lower wages mean shoddy work, more accidents, more injuries and more repairs."

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CWA President Morton Bahr holds the striker-produced Detroit Sunday Journal as he reports on campaigns against the Detroit News and Free Press. **See story, Page 6.**

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UNION YES

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Holding firm at the table

Special section, Pages 5-8

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 6 MARCH 25, 1996

Delegates to raise workers' political voice

By Michael Byrne and James B. Parks

Under the banner of "America Needs a Raise," a special convention March 25 will weigh an unprecedented effort to mobilize working Americans around key political issues that affect their lives and their children's future.

The program will build a nationwide grass-roots network to carry workers' voices into the national political debate. This "base of working people will hold elected officials accountable, regardless of party, and inject workers' rights and values into our national debate — this year and next year and the next," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

Delegates will consider a special assessment on national unions to help fund the ambitious $35 million political program, and will decide whether to endorse a presidential candidate. A series of workshops in the afternoon will provide a taste of the intensive political training that activists will undergo.

The convention comes as the federation prepares a series of town hall meetings in 29 cities, where workers will help to illuminate and dramatize the defining issue this political season: the growing wage gap between the rich and working families. The first meeting will be held April 11 in Baltimore. Other dates will be announced after the convention.

The convention activities were to begin Sunday, March 24, with an afternoon meeting of central labor council leaders. The Executive Council will meet March 25 prior to the convention, which opens at 9:30 a.m. in Washington's Capital Hilton Hotel. State AFL-CIO officers will meet the following day to prepare statewide campaigns.

Delegates will hear a report on the federation's plan to "reclaim America" from Republican extremists in Congress, who have launched an all-out attack on working families orchestrated by corporate interests — trying to cut deeply into Medicare and Medicaid, education, job safety and health and pension protections, while giving tax breaks to the rich and big business.

These GOP radicals have sought to deflect the blame for the declining standard of living onto those who are struggling the most — women, immigrants and people of color — while targeting unions, collective bargaining and worker protections with onerous legislation.

That frontal assault on workers' organizations was on display March 21 at a hearing by the House Oversight

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David Bacon/Impact Visuals

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney in Oakland demands that Kaiser treat workers and consumers fairly.

Labor links HMO consumers, workers

Sweeney warns Kaiser that unions will fight

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Workers took on Kaiser Permanente Inc. in California with an all-labor press anchored by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

Labor's chief met and rallied with workers in San Diego, Los Angeles and Oakland in a one-day blitz March 19 on behalf of 30,000 workers battling contract concession demands from the giant health maintenance organization.

"In its marketing efforts, Kaiser likes to brag that it is a 'union HMO' and a real friend to workers and their families," Sweeney told a San Diego crowd. "But if Kaiser is a friend to workers, you couldn't tell it by what they've been trying to do to the 60,000 union members who work for them here in California and around the country."

Kaiser has refused to bargain on a first contract with psychiatric nurses and psychologists of Service Employees Local 535 in San Diego, and 17,500 workers in Northern California continue working under expired contracts — SEIU Locals 535 and 250, Office and Professional Employees Local 29, MEBA/Engineers and Scientists of California and Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Local 6.

An AFT local in Portland, Ore., already is under the gun in negotiations with Kaiser, and contracts expire for some 12,000 members of SEIU Local 399 in Los Angeles at the end of the month.

"What's behind all this?" Sweeney asked. "Kaiser has decided to compete in the health care marketplace by cutting costs at the expense of quality patient care . . . and by denying decent wages, benefits and working conditions to its employees, the men and women who deliver that care.

"They call what they are doing 'restructuring,' " he said. "We call it 'destruction of patient care.' "

More than 120 of 200 Taft-Hartley funds in California offer Kaiser as a health care provider, and more than 250,000 fund participants are enrolled in the HMO, representing some 5 percent of California enrollments in Kaiser.

More than 300,000 state and county workers in the California Public Employees Retirement System also

Continued on Page 4

UAW reaches agreement at GM plant

17-day strike pinched automaker nationwide

By James B. Parks

Striking members of the UAW returned to work March 22 after a near unanimous ratification of a new agreement with General Motors, ending a 17-day strike that idled most of the giant automaker's assembly plants, forced the layoff of 177,000 workers and generated losses to GM of up to $50 million a day.

Some 3,000 members of UAW Local 696 in Dayton, Ohio, walked out at Delphi Chassis Systems brake plants March 5 when negotiations failed to yield a new local agreement on health and safety issues and subcontracting. The UAW's national contract with GM allows the union to strike at any covered plant over certain issues. Ninety-nine percent of those members voting approved the new agreement.

A union flier given to members outlining the agreement said GM would add 275 employees to reduce overtime and provide ergonomic relief in various jobs, while a committee would be established to pursue an additional 269 new jobs. The agreement also secures 122 existing jobs for antilock brake systems through 2004.

The deal resolves 600 safety complaints and commits $6.5 million to correct health and safety violations.

Further, GM agreed to replace work that would be lost by its outsourcing of antilock brake work to Robert Bosch GmbH, a German company that operates a nonunion plant in South Carolina.

Under the 1993 contract with GM, the company is required to notify the union 150 days in advance of any plans to outsource work. The union then has 90 days to present a counterproposal for the work. If the union proposal is not competitive, GM is free to contract out the work. GM admits it did not notify the union properly of the plan to use Bosch.

The union also was not satisfied with the company's efforts to determine the ergonomic risks for workers who perform jobs with repetitive motion.

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ORGANIZING

HERE on the menu

Cafeteria workers employed by Marriott Management Services at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., voted 63-40 to join the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees.

The organizing campaign is part of a broad effort aimed at low-wage workers across the city. The Marriott campaign started in September 1995 with workers seeking respect on the job, affordable health care and an increase in benefits and wages. The union also organized support on campus among administrators and teachers.

Trinity now joins the University of Hartford, Wesleyan and Central Connecticut State University as campuses on which unionized cafeteria employees who work at least 20 hours receive free health insurance and an hourly wage between $9 and $12.

Local 217 represents 1,875 hotel and restaurant workers in Connecticut and Rhode Island. The union recently has had success in organizing Marriott cafeteria workers in Pawtucket, R.I., and municipal cafeterias in the New Haven area.

Claiborne workers UNITEd

Workers at Amity Dyeing and Finishing in Augusta, Ga., a subsidiary of Liz Claiborne Inc., voted 109-68 on March 14 for UNITE.

Amity is the last U.S. Claiborne facility to organize. Workers at Amity received fewer benefits, did not have a pension plan, sick days, a shift differential or job security like workers at Claiborne's other unionized plants.

"This election victory at Amity is a testament to the fact that workers all across the South are tired of being treated like second-class citizens," said Bruce Raynor, executive vice president and southern regional director of UNITE. "We look forward to negotiating a top-notch contract that addresses the workers' issues."

LIUNA for Navajo health

The Navajo Nation Health Care Employees overwhelming voted for representation with the Laborers.

The union will represent 604 health care employees at the Gallup Indian Medical Center and surrounding Indian Health Service clinics in Arizona and New Mexico.

The victory gives LIUNA Local 1376 1,800 workers at seven out of eight service units in the area, in addition to 2,500 employees in Albuquerque, N.M., Phoenix and Aberdeen, S.D.

Airline workers fly with IBT

Tired of empty promises, flight attendants at Sun Country Airlines Inc. voted in favor of Teamsters representation.

"Sun Country's 245 flight attendants want a union contract to get workers' rights and safety practices in writing," said IBT President Ron Carey.

"Sun Country did everything it could to keep working conditions unbearable," said Bruce Retrum, IBT Local 2000 president. "The flight attendants now have the clout they need to win a fair contract."

Sun Country Airlines is a charter airline with about 18 planes flying out of Minneapolis.



Photo by Neal Sacharow

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka discusses Union Summer and other labor community action projects with community leaders, parents and student organizers at a Citizenship Fair in Los Angeles. Trumka was visiting the L.A. Manufacturing Action Project, a multiunion organizing campaign.

Convention to weigh endorsements

Continued from Page 1

Committee on unions' political activity. The AFL-CIO refused to participate, and Democrats on the committee angrily walked out of the hearing, denouncing the proceeding as a sham and "a vendetta against organized labor."

Apparently jolted by labor's pivotal role in helping Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden win a special election in Oregon, Republican groups last month filed complaints against the AFL-CIO with the Federal Election Commission. And their cronies at the Heritage Foundation published a "study" in an attempt to limit the ability of unions to engage members in legislative and political battles.

"The AFL-CIO wears these specious charges as a badge of honor, and we take them as an incentive to continue to win and engage and empower our members and workers in America," the Executive Council declared in February, as it called for an unprecedented commitment by each union to help recruit, train and deploy activists in every congressional district to conduct a massive education and get-out-the-vote effort.

To fund this movement, the special convention will consider a one-year assessment on national unions of 15 cents per member per month. The assessment is not an increase in individual members' dues, but an additional share of union funds to be devoted to education, training and mobilization around the issues that workers have identified as most important.

If passed, this assessment would raise about $25 million. The federation and its largest unions would come up with additional money to reach the $35 million goal.

The bulk of the money would be used for television and radio advertisements that would help define major issues while promoting unions as the solution to workers' problems.

During the afternoon, delegates will attend six workshops on specific ways to implement the political program. The workshops will deal with subjects ranging from mobilizing around congressional issues to communications, from getting out the urban and women's vote to building grass-roots committees.

Polls show members worried, prefer Clinton

Recent polls show that the radical conservative agenda the Republicans adopted has backfired and instead has created a strong incentive among workers for change.

When asked what issue is most important to them, union members cite jobs and the economy. The top four economic issues are pensions and retirement security, preserving Medicare and health care benefits, stopping unfair labor practices and ensuring fair trade policies that don't encourage corporations to abandon their workers for offshore operations.

Union members also have offered guidance on the endorsement question. President Clinton is regarded favorably by 59 percent of union members, and enjoys a 67 percent to 22 percent edge over the apparent Republican nominee, Sen. Bob Dole (Kan.).

Several individual unions, including the Food and Commercial Workers, the Mine Workers and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, have endorsed Clinton. Others, however, are guided by internal endorsement procedures that may not be completed by the time of the special convention, which would preclude their vote for an endorsement.

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Workers' pressure kills Ballenger anti-OSHA bill

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Bowing to workers' efforts, Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.) told a home state newspaper he would shelve efforts to pass his legislation attacking the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

"Ballenger's announcement that he is abandoning his efforts to overhaul the nation's job safety laws is a victory for American working families," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said in a statement. "Local union activists should take pride in the announcement. It has been their efforts to hold Washington accountable that stopped this legislation to cut safety and health protections for 100 million American workers."

Sweeney cautioned workers to keep up the fight, since "equally damaging measures in the Senate (S. 1423) and Republican-sponsored budget cuts still pose significant threats."

Ballenger's measure, H.R. 1834, sought to abolish the Mine Safety and Health Administration, folding it into OSHA; prevent OSHA from enforcing the law unless a worker was killed or hospitalized; take away a worker's right to file a complaint with OSHA about job hazards unless the employer was informed first; and shift emphasis from enforcement measures to voluntary compliance programs.

In a story published March 20, the Charlotte (N.C.) Observer quoted Ballenger (R-N.C.) as saying, "Why should you fall on your sword for something that's not going anywhere?"

He gave three reasons for abandoning his push: President Clinton's announced intention to veto it; failure to gain commitment from House GOP leaders to push it for floor action; and Democrats' use of the issue to paint Republican lawmakers as insensitive to workers.

Teamsters President Ron Carey said Ballenger's move suggests that "Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole are putting their anti-worker attack dogs on a shorter leash during the election."

The AFL-CIO had led the charge against the bill even before its introduction in June 1995, and activists called attention to the GOP attempts to dismantle worker safety through advertisements, town forums, Legislative Action Committee meetings and rallies, marches and other activities throughout the year.

"They spent big money beating up on these guys," Ballenger told the Charlotte newspaper.

Labor's efforts continue against S. 1423, a measure similar to Ballenger's and one that also includes a provision allowing company unions. The bill has been sent to the floor from the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, but no action is scheduled.

In addition, funding remains in question for the rest of this fiscal year for OSHA. The agency has been funded by a series of continuing resolutions, with the most recent measure having expired March 22.

The House March 7 passed an appropriations bill that would cut OSHA's budget by 10 percent, with the enforcement budget slashed by 21 percent and compliance assistance increased by $8.6 million. OSHA's field staff would be cut by nearly 20 percent, and the agency would be prohibited from issuing rules on ergonomic hazards — or to require recordkeeping on ergonomic injuries and illnesses.

The Senate bill, passed March 19, trims OSHA's budget by 7 percent overall and cuts enforcement by 20 percent, but with compliance assistance increased by $12.3 million. The bill would cut field staff by about 14 percent and would allow OSHA to continue to work on developing an ergonomics rule.

Under the banner "Safe Jobs — Keep the Promise Alive," workers will renew their efforts for safe workplaces on April 28, Workers Memorial Day, and the 25th anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. For information on materials, see Page 11.

'Right-to-work' sham exposed in Senate hearing

By Mike Hall

The motive behind a move to establish a national right-to-work law "isn't about individual rights as the term 'right-to-work' implies," but is to attack workers, their rights, their unions and their wages, the AFL-CIO told a Senate panel March 15.

The legislation "is about weakening unions, destroying democracy in the workplace and forcing workers to labor for up to 20 percent less than they are now earning," Don Judge, executive secretary of the Montana AFL-CIO, told the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

The bill, S. 581, was introduced by one of the more anti-worker and anti-union members, Sen. Lauch Faircloth (R-N.C.). A similar bill, H.R. 1279, is in the House. Both would forbid unions and employers from negotiating union security clauses and arrangements for agency fees for workers who object to union representation.

Backers of the bill made several bogus claims about its impact. Rep. Robert Goodlatte (R-Va.), a sponsor of the House bill, claimed that income in the 21 right-to-work states is actually higher than in other states.

But Judge noted that, in reality, the average wages in states with such laws are 18 percent less than free-bargaining states. When the difference between union and nonunion income is included in the equation, a national right-to-work law could drop wages by 20 percent, he said.

There already is a tremendous and growing wage gap in the nation, and the result is "working families have no money to spend. They are neglecting their children to work two or three jobs just to get by, their credit cards are stretched to the limit and they have little hope of climbing out of debt," he said.

"Why, in the middle of such a situation, would you consider cutting their wages by another 20 percent?" Judge asked. "That would be like throwing matches into a pool of gasoline."

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) noted the irony that most of the bill's Republican supporters cry about the intrusions of the federal government on states' rights on one hand, but "are willing to override the states" and pass a bill that affects labor law across the country.

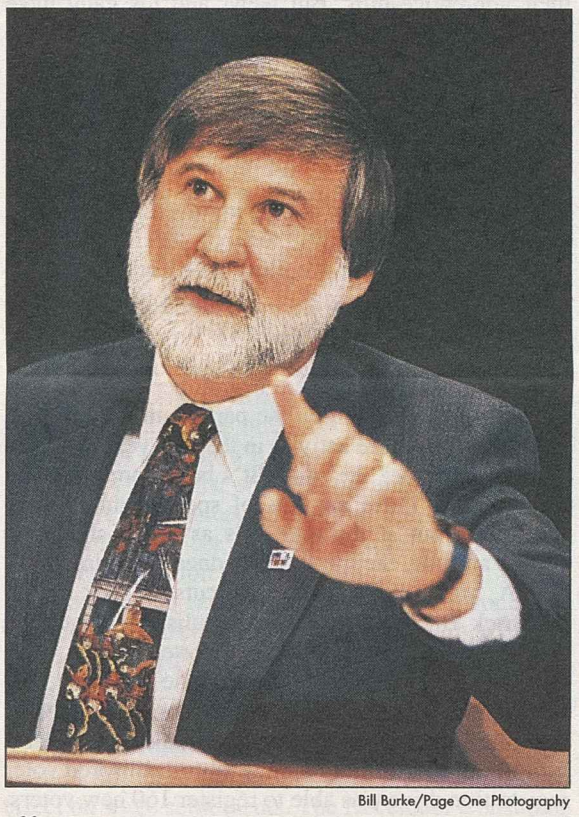
"When it comes to bashing workers and busting unions, the congressional radicals are all in favor of using the big stick of the federal government," Food and Commercial Workers President Douglas H. Dority said in a statement.

Judge said the current federal law does not force anyone to join a union against their will, as right-to-work proponents falsely claim. He said the law allows employers and unions to negotiate clauses in their contracts that spread the cost of representation among all members of the group.

Workers "know that it isn't democratic for some people in their workplace to get union wages and benefits and contract protections without paying their fair share," he said.

If a worker doesn't want to join the union, he or she may opt to pay an "agency" fee, which current federal law says can be reduced to cover only collective bargaining and administration and enforcement of contracts.

There are many protections and "outs" for individuals who oppose unions, Judge noted, asking, "What are the protections for individuals who propose unions? What is really at stake here is the right of workers to engage in the democratic process of joining together to form and maintain a viable and effective labor organization."



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

"Why . . . would you consider cutting (workers') wages by another 20 percent? That would be like throwing matches into a pool of gasoline."

— Don Judge, executive secretary Montana AFL-CIO

Employer abuse of immigration laws spotlighted

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

An Iron Worker joined with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich at a press conference spotlighting how employers are abusing the immigration system to replace U.S. workers with foreign workers.

Anthony Rosaci, secretary-treasurer of Iron Workers Local 455, told reporters that in his local union alone, "thousands of iron workers are being passed over for work to foreigners. Employers pay them low salaries, no benefits and lead them to believe they will help them get a green card."

Rosaci's story is not unusual. In fact, American workers will continue to lose jobs to foreign workers if the government does not intervene, Reich and Kennedy said, pointing to inadequate protections for workers in the pending Immigration Reform Act of 1996.

"Firms are filling new positions by importing cheap foreign workers instead of hiring available Americans," Kennedy told reporters. "With a quarter of American workers now dependent upon temporary jobs for their survival, it is unconscionable that employers are not required to recruit U.S. workers first."

Under current law, employers are supposed to recruit U.S. workers before bringing in permanent immigrant workers. But employers often ignore that requirement.

Kennedy and Reich also blasted bill sponsor Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) for eliminating proposed changes to cut by 35 percent the number of employment-based immigrants annually admitted into the United States. "The reforms would help give American workers the fair opportunity they deserve to get and keep high-wage, high-skill jobs and raise their family income," Reich said.

Kennedy said he will seek to reduce the length of temporary work or H-1B visas from six years to three years to ensure that they are "genuinely temporary," and to require that employers seeking to participate in the program actively recruit U.S. workers first. Other reforms outlined by Kennedy include layoff protections, recruitment requirements and employer contributions to a training fund.

The AFL-CIO also supports reducing the current annual limit of 140,000 permanent, job-related visas to 90,000, another provision that Simpson says he will remove from the measure.

Meanwhile, House and Senate committees moved to divide comprehensive immigration legislation into two separate components — legal and illegal immigration.



Sharon K. Williams/The Labor Paper

Iron Worker Jimmy Knapp serves soup outside while Newt Gingrich attends a $150-a-plate fund-raiser.

Gingrich doesn't play in Peoria

Workers won't swallow cruel gruel of 'Contract'

By Mike Hall

Inside the union-built civic center in Peoria, Ill., 1,200 Republicans paid $150 a plate to eat with House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.). Outside, about 1,500 union members and other activists stood in a symbolic soup line to protest the attack by Gingrich and his Republican henchmen on workers and their families.

The soup was a lot like the "Contract with America," said Mike McNally, president of the West Central Illinois AFL-CIO. "It tastes like crap and sticks in your throat."

The March 5 protest was one in a series of union-sponsored rallies and protests aimed at Gingrich and his anti-worker, pro-business "contract" as he attends dozens of black-tie, GOP fund-raisers across the country.

In Columbus, Ohio, about 800 protesters took part in an AFL-CIO-sponsored demonstration outside a Gingrich fund-raising event in late February. In Philadelphia, several hundred joined a similar protest. Earlier this year, protesters dogged Gingrich at another round of money events, including 1,000 who turned out in Detroit.

Last fall, as he was promoting his book, Gingrich was confronted at most stops by labor and community activists. A costumed grim reaper followed Gingrich in southern Ohio to protest workplace safety cuts. Gingrich eventually canceled his book tour, saying he was exhausted.

In Peoria, McNally said his soup recipe called for "one part mean-spirited Newt, 74 parts freshmen congressional members, seasoned with a sprinkling of the nonsense found in the Contract with America, simmered over hot rhetoric and sprinkled with racism, cynicism and polarization before serving."

Illinois AFL-CIO President Don Johnson told a crowd that the 74 Republican freshmen — most radically conservative — wield an extraordinary influence in Congress.

He noted the irony that the civic center "was built by highly skilled union craftsman who had completed their apprenticeships. But Newt and his gang have decided to let the 74 first-year congressional apprentices run the country."

Norman Hill, president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, told the crowd, "The current leadership of Congress has declared war on unions, the elderly, the poor and the sick."

Hill urged the group to stay involved and active in the upcoming campaign, "one of the most critical election years. Those we elect will lead us into the next century. Our being . . . out here today sends a message — we're standing together."

McNally said there has been a growing awareness about the importance of the November elections and a blossoming activism on the part of union workers.

"I have seen more activity in the past year than I've seen in a decade," he said. "It's based on Newt and the contract. There are lots of specific things they don't like, but at the core, it's as much about the GOP's attitude, the mean-spiritedness. The issues — OSHA, Medicare and education cuts — back it up."

Patrick Buchanan's phony populist message also didn't play in Peoria. Three supporters of the GOP presidential candidate tried to join the soup line, and they were jeered by the crowd and forced to leave.

McNally said more people are willing to get involved. In just one afternoon, a labor-sponsored voter registration drive was able to register 160 new voters. Four more drives are planned, he said.

More than a dozen unions volunteered to staff the local AFL-CIO's phone bank for Illinois' March 19 primary. Their goal was to get out the vote and begin generating support for candidates in the general election, including Rep. Richard Durbin (D), who is running to fill retiring Sen. Paul Simon's (D) seat.

One target will be freshman Rep. Ray LaHood (R), who got part of the proceeds from the tuxedo-clad crowd at the fund-raiser. His opponent is former state Rep. Mike Curran, who was with the protesters. He told the crowd the GOP plan to cut Medicare and Medicaid in order to give tax breaks to the rich was "outrageous, and the people here will not tolerate it."

Guidelines target violence against high-risk workers

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

With homicides now the second leading cause of death on the job, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has issued its first national guidelines to prevent assaults on workers in health care and social services.

The guidelines offer policy recommendations and practical ideas employers can use to deter violence in the workplace without jeopardizing compassionate care for clients and patients.

"This is an excellent step forward," said AFL-CIO Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Keith Mestrich, a member of the Labor Coalition Against Workplace Violence, which requested the guidelines. "Addressing violence in health care situations is part of the problem, but it also remains a serious problem in the retail industry. We look forward to guidelines in this industry."

Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich noted that although the new guidelines do not carry any regulatory weight, they are "a simple, common sense" attempt to help employers.

"Health care and social service workers often face aggressive patients, visit clients in dangerous neighborhoods, encounter violent situations in hospital emergency rooms or face other dangerous situations," said Reich. "But these deaths are not inevitable. Employers can reduce the risks to their workers with some common-sense strategies."

Members of the Service Employees and AFSCME joined Reich and OSHA Administrator Joseph A. Dear at a press conference announcing the guidelines. Merida Rodriguez of AFSCME Local 420 told of how, as a mental health aide at the Bronx Municipal Hospital in New York, she was hit in the stomach with a chair by a patient in 1994 and suffered a miscarriage as a result of the attack.

"What happened to me wouldn't have happened if many of the suggestions in these guidelines had been put into place," Rodriguez explained. "Patients have a right to quality care, and workers have a right to a safe workplace. We can only provide that care if we feel safe."

The guidelines call on employers to:

- Provide adequate staffing in areas where violence is more likely to occur.
- Keep records of threatening or violent workplace incidents.
- Make structural and procedural changes that protect workers from enraged clients or customers.
- Provide training and education in early warnings and prevention of workplace violence.
- Get employee input into reducing the threat of violence.
- Establish post-incident response procedures for victims and witnesses of violence.

While the guidelines are not an enforceable standard, they state that "employers can be cited for violating the general duty clause if there is a recognized hazard of workplace violence in their establishments and they do nothing to prevent it."

OSHA's general duty clause requires employers to provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

HMO consumers, workers join forces against Kaiser greed

Continued from Page 1

receive health care benefits through the company.

Talks have been ongoing between workers and their representatives and Kaiser, including contacts this year between Kaiser Chief Executive Officer David Lawrence and Sweeney, who sought a partnership of workers, unions and management to work on solutions.

Lawrence rejected Sweeney's overture and declared Kaiser had no intention of ever giving workers a voice in decisions affecting patient care.

"It is time, therefore, for us as a labor movement to begin to take direct action to convince Kaiser that joining the rest of the HMO industry in the gutter is neither an acceptable marketing strategy nor an appropriate operating philosophy," Sweeney said.

Sweeney outlined the choices facing workers — switch to other health care providers willing to treat workers fairly and deliver high-quality care, or use collective skills, money and power to change the direction Kaiser is taking.

The AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department has developed a strategy for coordinated bargaining and is working with the Executive Council Strategic Approaches Committee on other activities to help put Kaiser back on the high road.

The council in February issued a statement calling for workers to link the power of union purchasers of Kaiser services with the power of the company's unionized workers — with the first conference on that subject scheduled in California this spring.

"The labor movement must develop standards that address our members' concerns about the quality in health care delivery, including access to services, patient satisfaction with health plans and consumer protection and education," the council said. "The AFL-CIO at all levels must take the leadership role in assisting unions and the community on holding health plans accountable for providing affordable, quality care."

The council also advocated the development of purchasing alliances in major markets to increase price leverage and to help hold health plans accountable on quality. Coalitions also must bring together workers and patients as well as purchasers, all of whom have a voice in restructuring and other decisions affecting patient care.

Other unions with members at Kaiser include AFSCME, Steelworkers, Food and Commercial Workers and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees.

Unions held on to contract gains in 1995

By Iain Gold

Union negotiators were able to hold off well-organized attacks by business and anti-worker legislators, keeping many of the hard-won gains of previous years and using innovative approaches to provide new benefits in 1995 contracts.

Worker productivity continued to increase, but workers generally did not share in the gains. Corporate profits and executive compensation reached record levels, but private-sector employees' pay and benefits rose only 2.8 percent in 1995, the smallest gain since the Labor Department began keeping track of the figure in 1980.

Employers hewed narrowly to the bottom line, trimming payrolls through downsizing, contracting out, privatization, overseas production, plant relocation and increased hiring of contingent workers. Management justified cutting labor costs by citing "global competition" in the private sector and the need for "budget balancing" in the public sector. The bottom line for workers was short-changed wages and benefits, to the detriment of their families and communities.

The political climate was decidedly anti-worker as radical conservatives took over Congress and began a campaign to eliminate such long-time worker protections as prevailing wages, union security, overtime pay and health and safety laws.

The stifled economy

The economy slowed down in 1995 after the fast-paced growth of 1994. The Gross Domestic Product grew at an inflation-adjusted rate of 1.4 percent in 1995 — a drastic reduction from the 3.5 percent growth of last year.

Economic forecasts for 1996 look bleak. The unemployment rate changed little in 1995, with the annual rate averaging 5.6 percent. Officially, 7.4 million were unemployed in December. Another 1.6 million looked unsuccessfully for work, and 4.4 million were working part time even though they wanted full-time jobs. Total employment grew by less than 1.7 million jobs in 1995. However, two-thirds of those jobs were created in the low-paying services sector.

Employers continued to take advantage of the growing number of low-paid contingent workers, who have no benefits. Manpower Inc., the nation's largest private employer, increased its operating profits by 91.5 percent in 1995. Meanwhile, manufacturing employment continued to decline, losing 150,000 jobs.

U.S. trade policies exacerbated the employment situation. Tragically, labor's unheeded warnings about the North American Free Trade Agreement have proven to be correct. The United States will have a record trade deficit in 1995, approaching $175 billion. The combined merchandise trade deficit with our two NAFTA partners, Canada and Mexico, is on pace for an annual deficit of $33.6 billion, and resulted in roughly 570,000 jobs lost in 1995.

The Federal Reserve Board was successful in strangling the economy through a series of short-term interest rate increases that drove rates up 85 percent from February 1994 through February 1995. Three modest interest rate cuts in the past few months have not yet countered the effect of a year of sharp increases.

Union/nonunion comparison

In the slow 1995 economy, the advantage of belonging to a union was clear. The Labor Department's Employment Cost Index, which measures the changes in total compensation for civilian workers, rose 2.9 percent last year — the smallest increase since the index was introduced. All private-industry workers saw a total compensation increase of 2.8 percent, while state and local government compensation increased 3 percent.

Total compensation for union workers in the private sector increased 3 percent, compared with 2.8 percent for nonunion workers in 1995. Union workers saw an increase in benefits of 3.6 percent, compared with only 2.4 percent for nonunion workers.

But increases in compensation only paint part of the picture. The real union advantage is evident when comparing actual wage and benefit levels. In private industry, union workers' average total hourly compensation was $22.40, compared with $16.26 for nonunion, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. This represents a 38 percent edge for union-represented employees.

In hourly wages and salaries, private-sector union workers earn, on average, $14.42 per hour versus $11.90 per hour for non-union, for an absolute advantage of $2.52 per hour, or $5,241 per year.

The union advantage is greatest in the level of benefits in the private sector. Union members receive benefits that amount to an average of $7.99 per hour. Nonunion workers receive $4.35, only 54 percent of the amount received by their union counterparts.

Employers are paying union members insurance benefits of $2.24 per hour, compared with 98 cents per hour for nonunion workers.

Among blue-collar workers, the union advantage is even more pronounced. Unionized blue-collar workers earn $8.93 more per hour in total compensation than their nonunion counterparts.

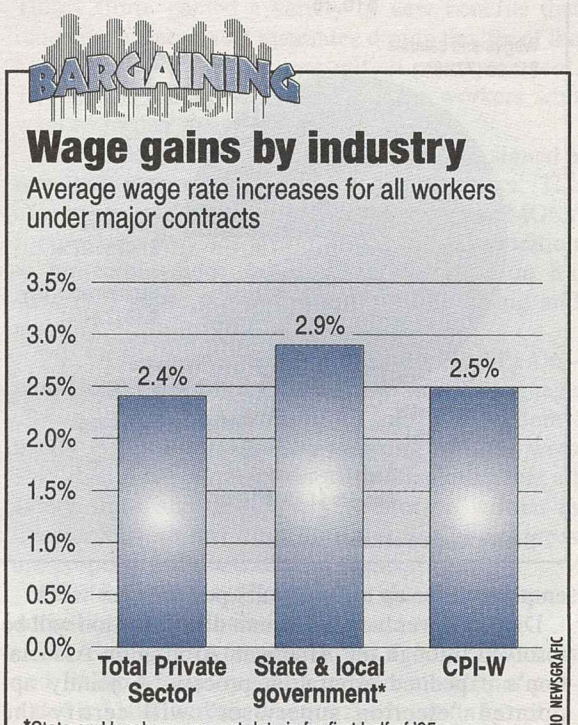
Union women earn 39 percent more than nonunion women. Unionized African-Americans earn, on average, a 45 percent premium, while Hispanics earn 60 percent more.

Wage settlements

The low rate of inflation in 1995 had a moderating effect on wage settlements. The December Consumer Price Index for Urban and Clerical Workers was only 2.5 percent higher than a year earlier, equaling the rate of two years ago and down from the 2.7 percent rate for December 1994.

The average wage increase negotiated in 1995 slightly exceeded that of 1994. The average wage increase in the first year was 2.3 percent for major settlements at private-sector companies with 1,000 or

Iain Gold is the 1995-96 research associate in the AFL-CIO Public Policy Department, formerly the Economic Research Department.



Tough road ahead in '96 negotiations

Bargaining activity in 1996 will be much lighter than in 1995, with contracts covering about 2.4 million workers scheduled to expire or be reopened. These negotiations will affect 30 percent of all workers under major agreements in private industry and state and local government.

In the private sector, nearly 1.6 million workers, or 31 percent of those under major agreements, will be involved in collective bargaining. The largest number are in the automotive industry, where the UAW will bargain with the Big Three automakers.

The bituminous coal industry contract opens at the end of the year for wage and benefit negotiations. Other talks will be concentrated in the construction, wholesale and retail trades, and steel and aluminum industries.

State and local government bargaining will be the lightest since 1985, with contracts expiring for 26 percent of the 2.8 million workers under major agreements. Eighty-five percent of the 740,000 affected state employees work in Florida and Pennsylvania.

Bargaining in 1996 will not be easy. An annual survey of employers by the Bureau of National Affairs shows management plans to continue trying to hold down labor costs. The survey also showed employers plan to continue seeking reductions in health care costs through savings in premiums and deductibles.

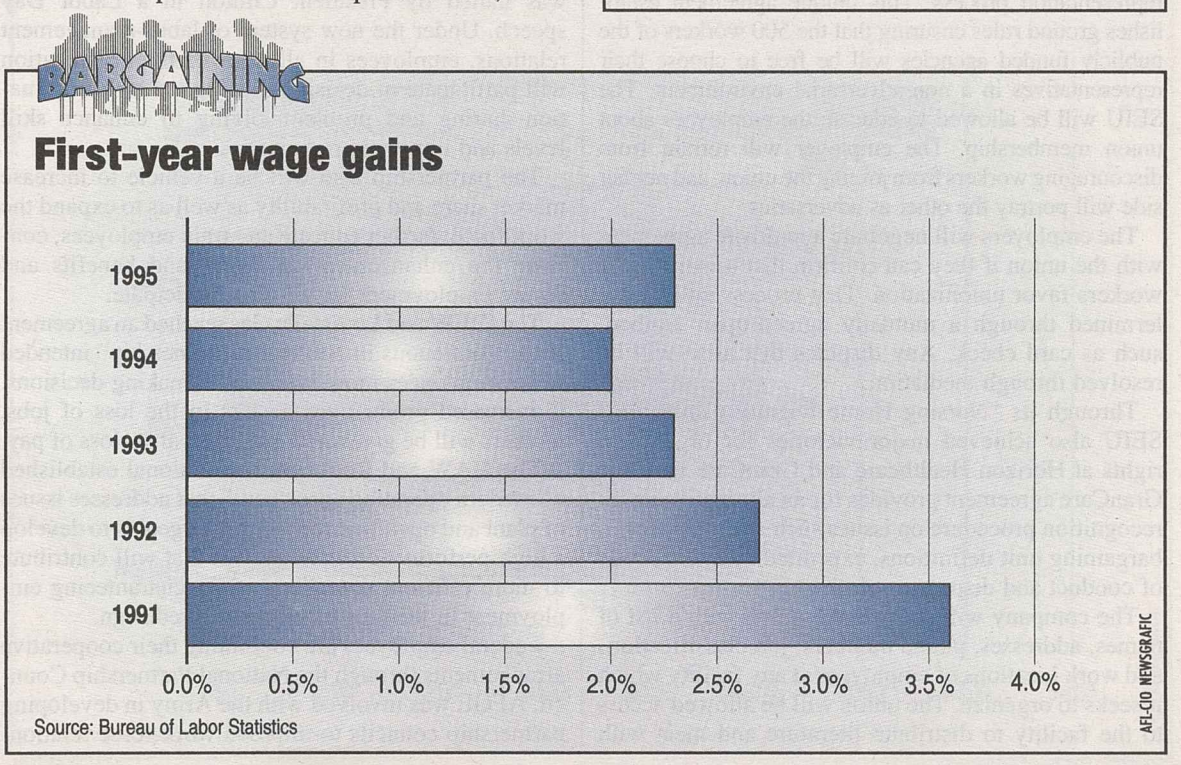
More survey respondents than in the past stated that they will try to negotiate two-tier wage structures and lump-sum payments and eliminate COLAs.

Undaunted by President Clinton's executive order banning federal contractors from using striker replacements, 80 percent of employers said they would replace or would consider replacing workers who go out on strike.

Legislative actions also could hinder bargaining in 1996. Conservatives have taken advantage of their sweeping 1994 election victories in Congress and in state legislatures to propose so-called "right-to-work" bills.

Prevailing wage laws also are under fire, as is the ability of unions to wage coordinated campaigns. Under the guise of budget cutting, anti-worker legislators also are attempting to strip agencies that monitor national workplace laws of funding, leaving them powerless to prevent many workplace abuses.

Telecommunications reform will further deregulate that industry, possibly creating turbulent times for workers, as evidenced by AT&T's recent announcement that it will cut 40,000 jobs.



more employees, up from 2 percent last year. The increase was 2.5 percent over the life of the contract, excluding cost-of-living adjustments and lump-sum payments, slightly higher than last year's 2.3 percent average.

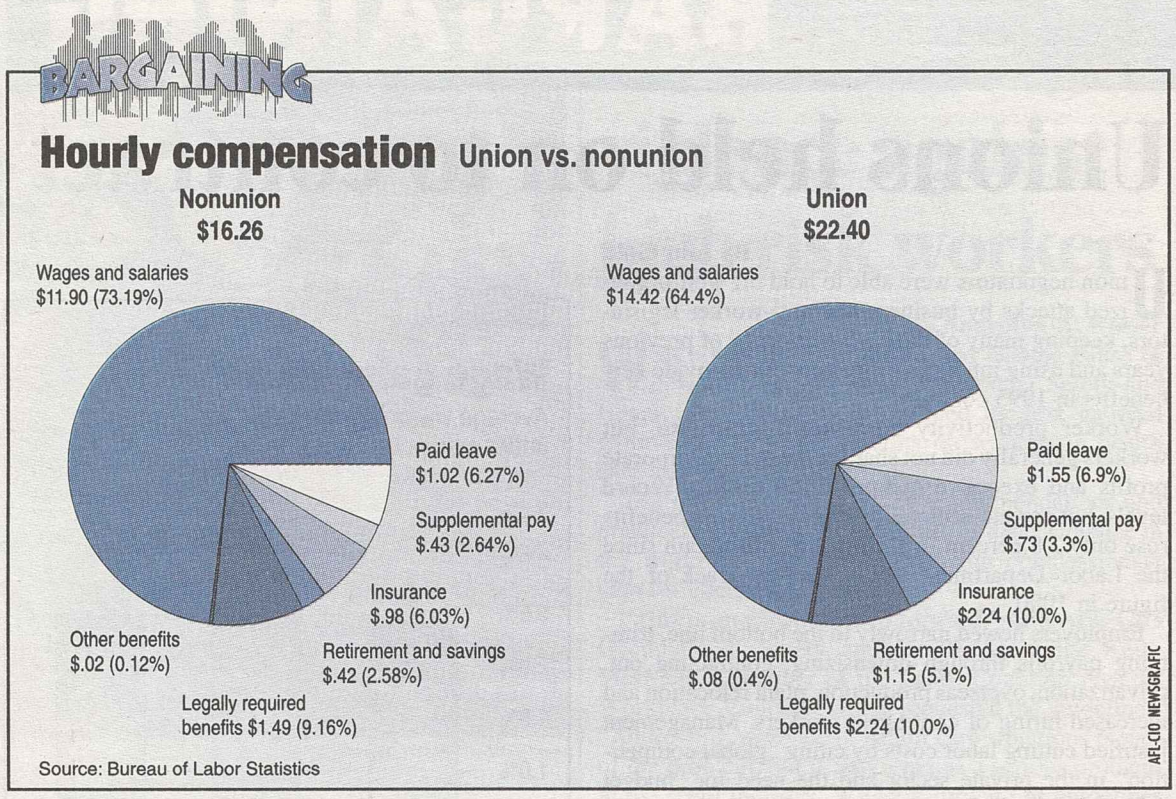
In the public sector, workers' wages increased by an average of 2 percent in the first year and 2.3 percent annually over the term of the agreements as of June 1995. There are no figures beyond June, after federal budget cuts forced the Labor Department to stop collecting all settlement data.

When wage changes from previous contracts are calculated into the 1995 settlements, wage rates for 5.4 million private-sector employees covered by major contracts increased an average of 2.4 percent — one-tenth of a percent below the rate of inflation as measured by the CPI-W. For the estimated 2.8 million state and local government workers covered by major agreements, wage rates increased an average of 2.9 percent through the first half of 1995.

The BLS reported that 47 agreements added cash lump-sum provisions in 1995 while only 15 discontinued the practice. In 1995, 46 percent of workers under major agreements received lump-sum payments — the highest proportion since the BLS began compiling the information in 1987. Lump-sum payments are not counted in the data on wage increases since they do not add to the base from which many benefits and future across-the-board increases are calculated.

COLAs were added in three settlements, discontinued in 12 settlements and continued in 32. The proportion of private-sector workers covered by COLA clauses has dipped to 22 percent, down from 40 percent in the late 1980s.

Deferred wage increases will average 3.1 percent in 1996 for all workers under major contracts negotiated in previous years. Workers in the private sector will see average deferred wage gains of 3.1 percent, while state and local government employees are scheduled for wage gains averaging 3.2 percent.



Major issues in 1995 negotiations

The impact of slow job growth and uncertainty about the future was central to almost every major collective bargaining negotiation in 1995. Several unions, including the Machinists, Communication Workers, AFSCME and Teamsters, tackled many of these issues head-on by negotiating employment and income security provisions to soften the effects of short-sighted business strategies.

Some of the agreements call for union participation in decision-making and consultation before subcontracting. Education and training programs grew in importance as job insecurity grew. Training programs often protect workers from becoming obsolete in the face of technological change.

Maintaining health care coverage was another priority for union negotiators. Even though health care costs have begun to moderate, employers are still seeking to further hold down medical bills.

"Bargain to organize"

Faced with increasing use of nonunion contractors, many unions "bargained to organize" those operations through neutrality agreements and card-check clauses.

The Service Employees and four Massachusetts mental health provider agencies signed a landmark agreement late in 1995 providing a new approach to the representation process. This unique agreement establishes ground rules ensuring that the 500 workers of the publicly funded agencies will be free to choose their representatives in a non-adversarial environment. The SEIU will be allowed to educate the employees about union membership. The employer will refrain from discouraging workers from joining the union, and neither side will portray the other as adversaries.

The employers will negotiate a multisite agreement with the union if they can confirm that a majority of workers favor unionization. That process will be determined through a mutually agreed-upon method, such as card check. Any disputes that arise will be resolved through mediation.

Through its "Nursing Home Dignity Campaign," SEIU also achieved major victories for organizing rights at Horizon Healthcare and GranCare Inc. The GranCare agreement provides for an alternative union recognition procedure on issues such as union access, bargaining unit definitions, expedited elections, code of conduct and dispute resolution.

The company will provide the union with a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, job classifications and work locations of employees at any facility which it seeks to organize. The union will be allowed access to the facility to distribute literature and meet with employees for up to five hours per shift per week.

Disputes over bargaining unit determination will be resolved through the American Arbitration Association's expedited arbitration process. A jointly appointed "election supervisor" will certify the authorization cards and schedule an election.

The Horizon settlement provides for card-check recognition, as does a similar agreement with Community Health Foundation of East Los Angeles.

The 110,000 employees represented by CWA and the Electrical Workers reached an agreement with AT&T that provides for increased access to jobs at some AT&T subsidiaries that are not unionized.

A joint education program will introduce the concept of unions in the workplace to unrepresented locations in a cooperative environment. The organizing process calls for joint meetings to discuss union access to locations, conduct and binding dispute resolution.

The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees signed parallel neutrality agreements with five Las Vegas hotels covering some 8,900 workers. The hotels also agreed not to subcontract bargaining unit jobs.

Innovations in cooperation

Building upon the visionary theme of the 1994 AFL-CIO report, "The New American Workplace: A Labor Perspective," some unions negotiated agreements that provided for increased employee involvement in key workplace design and decision-making.

The key element of a successful partnership between labor and management is mutual respect, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney has said. "The union will recognize both the responsibilities and difficulties of managing . . . Management will recognize that the union is the collective voice of their employees and that it also has the responsibility and the right to organize and represent the voice of its members in decisions which affect them."

The IAM and Amerigon, a producer of automotive components, signed an agreement establishing a partnership to create a high-performance workplace that was hailed by President Clinton in a Labor Day speech. Under the new system of labor-management relations, employees in all parts of the organization will participate in decision-making through information-sharing and problem-solving to enhance skill levels and improve productivity.

The partnership also will be a vehicle to increase market share and profitability as well as to expand the work force, further educate and train employees, continue the enhancement of wages and benefits and secure employment for all who participate.

The IBEW and Louisville Gas reached an agreement for a "continuous improvement partnership" intended to get employees more involved in making decisions. If increased productivity results in the loss of jobs, workers will be given new positions at no loss of pay.

The UAW and Rockwell International established a "modern operating agreement" that addresses issues of plant and operation redesign. The goal is to develop a high-performance work system that will contribute to more efficient operations while guaranteeing employment in the face of workplace redesign.

Federal employees are continuing their cooperative arrangements through the National Partnership Council. AFGE was involved with the Army in developing partnership councils to improve work-force relationships and make the facility a better place to work, live and train.

The partnership councils are made up of an equal number of labor and management, and decisions are made by consensus. The councils work on issues such as creating a positive and productive work environment, personnel practices and mission accomplishments. The councils are not designed to replace open discussions between supervisors and stewards, but to enhance those relationships.

The Mine Workers were able to extend the Labor Management Positive Change Process and job security provisions it won in negotiations with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association to the mining company of Pittsburgh & Midway. The LMPCP empowers members and gives them a strong say in mine operations. The pact also includes a job- and income-security provision. Three of five new hires will be previously laid-off UMWA members from any area mines. The UMWA members' pensions also were increased 30 percent, and a new annual bonus was instituted for surviving spouses and disabled miners.

The AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department coordinates a bargaining relationship consisting of the IAM and Paperworkers at Harley Davidson. These unions will be rewarded for assisting Harley Davidson turn around the company. Harley is planning on adding a facility, and both unions have been extended an offer of recognition for the additional workers when the new plant or facility is established. These parties already have a strong partnership agreement that provides union representation from the boardroom to the shop floor.

The Steelworkers established a joint committee with Newport News Shipbuilding that will examine and make recommendations on workplace issues. Labor and management will be working together to ensure that the shipyard will be able to compete for new work.

The IBT and Rhode Island Hospital reached an agreement that gives the 1,800 service and maintenance workers a voice, through joint committees, on issues such as staffing and working conditions that affect quality patient care. Another committee will be created before anticipated work-force reductions to ensure that the restructuring maintains employment goals and provides quality care.

Employment and income security

Two of the main issues unions faced in 1995 were how to retain work that was targeted for contracting out or privatization, and how to guarantee continued income for workers once they retire or leave the job.

An agreement between the IAM and Boeing set a new standard in job-security language in the areas of subcontracting, reassignment and layoff protection. In an effort to reduce the impact on workers, the company and union will meet at least semi-annually to discuss subcontracting. Boeing will provide the union with an overview of its policies and plans relating to subcontracting. The union will receive 90 days, notice of any decision to contract out work and get an opportunity to suggest alternatives to subcontracting.

Any employee who loses a job because of subcontracting will be reassigned or retrained for available work inside the company. Laid-off employees will be able to choose either a lump-sum benefit and forfeit recall rights or 26 weeks of income continuation benefits.

In an agreement with AFSCME, the city of Pitts-

burgh pledged not to renew any expiring contracts with companies that take work away from city employees.

The agreement ushered in a new cooperative relationship between the city and its employees. One result of that relationship was the joint development of a comprehensive health care package that improves benefits and saves millions of dollars.

CWA and Ameritech negotiated a "hometown jobs" clause that protects members if the company decides to move a job to another location or eliminate a job because of technology. The company is obligated to find a job for that employee within commuting distance, or 35 miles. Employees also will be provided training if the work is substantially different.

The agreement between the IBT and the nation's carhaul companies, covering 12,000 unionized drivers, dockworkers and mechanics, greatly limits the practice of "double breasting," the use of nonunion subsidiaries to handle bargaining-unit work. The contract caps the number of nonunion drivers the subsidiaries can employ and bars them from competing for bargaining unit work.

The UAW was able to preserve jobs at Chrysler's McGraw Glass division through an agreement that provides for $35 million investment in new technology to keep the facility from becoming obsolete. In addition, some contracted-out work will be brought back to the plant.

The Operating Engineers, in an agreement with the Wisconsin Public Service Corp., achieved protection against layoffs over the term of the contract and a greater voice in company policy in exchange for the loosening of jurisdictional lines.

The USWA and General Motors agreed to a joint committee to review subcontracting and develop ways of retaining bargaining unit work.

SEIU members in Detroit signed an agreement with cleaning contractors that provides for job protection. The companies must get union approval to subcontract any bargaining unit work. In the event of layoffs because of productivity or service problems, the contract allows the union to meet with management to discuss ways of alleviating the situation.

When Boston's public City Hospital was merged with Boston University Medical Center into a single private nonprofit hospital, AFSCME and SEIU led a coalition of unions that negotiated labor protection provisions at the 11th hour as the city council was voting on the merger. The agreement guaranteed continued recognition for most unions in the new private institution.

The UMWA was able to limit the number of temporary jobs the company can create to 15 percent of the work force in an agreement with Knife River Coal Mining.

The apparel industry is one of the hardest hit in terms of job loss and foreign competition. UNITE signed an agreement with the Clothing Manufacturers Association that allows increases in outsourcing but restricts member companies from using any sources that do not observe such basic international standards as living wages and benefits, reasonable working hours, freedom of association and the right to organize or join a union.

Training and education

Training and the upgrading of skills can help preserve union jobs. Many training programs try to soften the social and economic costs of corporate restructuring. Other education plans help workers upgrade their skills, increasing their wages and productivity.

In an effort to address the dramatic restructuring in the health care industry, AFSCME extended an innovative agreement with Philadelphia-area hospitals to include Jefferson University Hospital. This unique contract, which was praised by Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, establishes a committee made up of two union and two employer representatives. The committee oversees a variety of programs funded through a new Employment, Training and Job Security Fund.

Employees who lose their full-time jobs will receive 80 percent of their salaries and health insurance for one year. Laid-off employees must enter an assigned training program and accept referral to a new position at any facility where workers are represented by AFSCME.

AT&T, in the agreement with both CWA and IBEW, continued its commitment to education, training and academic programs for employees, their children and communities through the "Operation 2000 — Today and Tomorrow" program. This provides each employee the opportunity for at least 40 hours each year of education and training that is skill-based or job-related. In addition, a tuition assistance plan provides aid for classes in certain subjects at accredited institutions.

The company also supported education at the undergraduate level, with 70 annual scholarships of up to $6,500 each for AT&T family members.

In a first contract, UNITE members employed at Tultex Corp. gained a variety of new benefits that range from a no-layoff guarantee during the life of the agreement to a 100 percent tuition reimbursement. The tuition reimbursement plan is for workers who want to further their skills in the industry.

The Boilermakers in nine southern states signed a new two-year contract with 100 contractors. The agreement standardizes contributions for the MOST fund, which provides apprentice training, in addition to pre-employment screening and certification for substance abuse, safety training, health testing and welding.

The IBT in a settlement with Disney World's Dolphin Hotel established English-as-a-second-language classes that will be available on site. The predominantly Haitian- and Spanish-speaking workers were also able to win contract language stipulating that all safety signs and disciplinary notices be written in Creole, Spanish and English to ensure all employees are properly informed of their rights.

USWA members at Kaiser were able to increase the annual cap on tuition reimbursement to $1,500.

The Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers and Philip Morris reached an agreement that provided a $100 increase in annual education benefits. Each employee is eligible for a $300 grant for educational purposes. The $2.3 million fund is administered through a joint labor-management committee.

Pensions and retirement security

The USWA and WCI Steel agreed to put $28 million into a trust fund to protect employee benefits after LTV sold the facility to WCI. Half of the trust fund goes to a defined-benefit pension plan which will pay retirees a minimum of $35 per month per year of service.

The UFCW and Kroger Co. were able to extend pension benefits to part-time employees in the meat and deli contract that brings them in line with the part-time clerks. At Campbell Soup Co., the union won a 401(k) plan that will match 50 cents for every dollar of employee contributions.

The pension formula for Flint Glass Workers was improved in a new contract with Anchor Hocking Glass. The new formula bases benefits on total annual earnings rather than an amount based on a flat per month per year of service.

Many new contracts in 1995 created or enhanced 401(k) plans, including agreements between UPIU and Champion International Corp., IBT and Price Club, and USWA and Geneva Steel.

The IBEW and Hoover Co. inked a contract that changes the formula for early retirement as well as increasing the pension formula from $22 per month per year of service to $30 by the final year of the agreement.

The Transport Workers and American Airlines signed a six-year contract that offers an early retirement option to workers who are at least 45 years old and have 15 years of service. They will be credited with five additional years of age and service.

The New York City Hotel and Motel Trades Council, representing nine local unions, came to terms with the Hotel Association, representing 79 New York hotels. The pact reduces the age requirement to qualify for normal pension benefits by 10 years, to age 55, for employees with at least 25 years of service.

BCT's pact with Lorillard Inc. establishes a free survivor's benefit. A retiree's surviving spouse will receive 50 percent of the employee's pension benefit.

Health benefits

While health benefit costs have moderated in the past couple of years, employers still sought in 1995 to lower their costs by demanding a variety of givebacks, including higher employee contributions to monthly premiums, increased deductibles and transfering coverage to PPOs and HMOs. Unions had to stand up to this strategy using methods of self-help or joint committees to ensure the quality and level of benefits did not decline with the change of carriers.

The CWA and IBEW were successful in maintaining full retiree health care coverage in the agreement with AT&T. These unions also protected health insurance provisions in negotiations with the regional Bell operating companies. CWA's contract with Southwestern Bell provides for a medical cost reimbursement plan that puts pre-tax money into a fund to pay for certain medical expenses, at an estimated savings of 28 percent to 35 percent. The contract also provides for reimbursement of the cost of an air ambulance up to $2,000, and gives immunization coverage to all employees.

The USWA modified existing health care language in a new agreement with Kaiser. Deductibles in the managed care plan are mostly eliminated and in-network benefits now will be reimbursed at 100 percent, rather than the previous 90 percent.

The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union signed an agreement with A&P subsidiaries that calls for increases in the employer's health and welfare contribution rate averaging 9 percent each year.

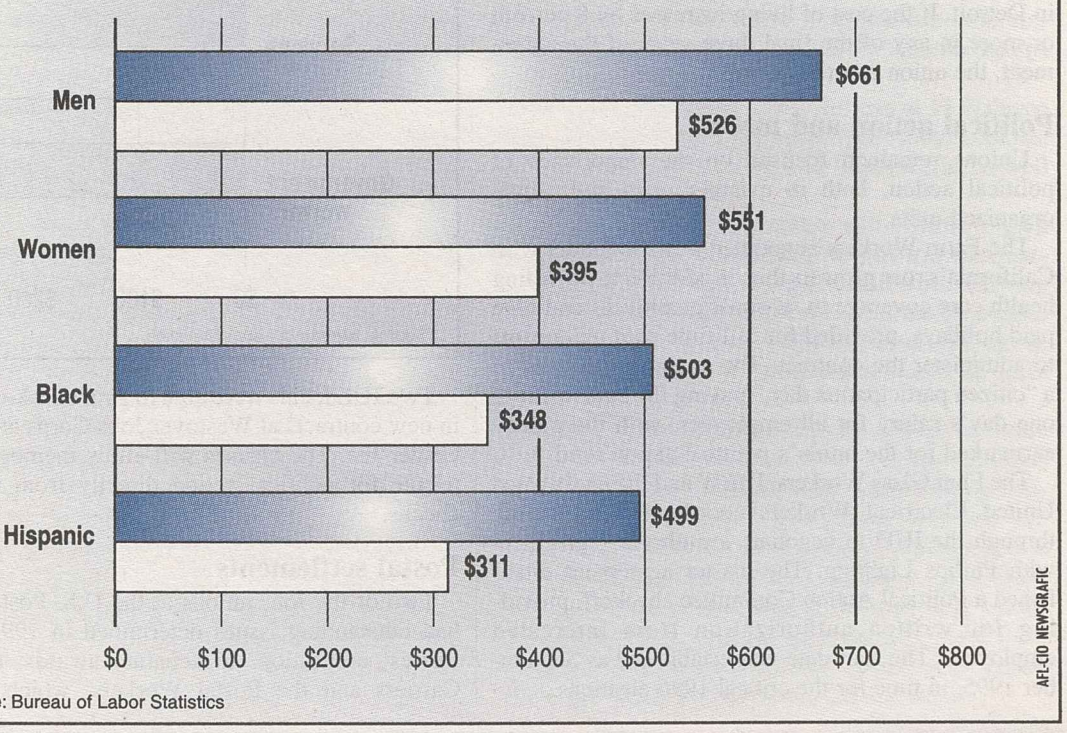
AFSCME, in an agreement with the state of Wisconsin covering 26,000 blue- and white-collar workers, found a creative solution to problems involving retiree health care premiums.

Employees will receive double value of their accumulated sick leave upon retirement. The dollar amount then will be deposited into a special account to be used to pay the retirees' health care premiums. To be eligible, employees must have a minimum of 15 years of service and 750 hours of banked sick leave.

IBT members at the University of Minnesota approved a contract that includes a gain-sharing sick-leave incentive plan. Using the amount of sick leave taken in 1995 as the base, employees who reduce their

BARGAINING

Median weekly pay by groups:
The union advantage, 1995



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

sick leave by two or more days will receive a cash bonus equal to a day's pay.

The Electronic Workers and the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity expanded a health plan to include pre-tax payments for medication contributions as well as dependent care expenses.

Family provisions

The BCT, in an agreement that covers 1,800 Sunshine Bakeries employees, won a family and medical leave clause that protects members' vacation days from being used as part of a leave of absence.

AFSCME and Harvard University reached a new accord that endorses employee efforts to arrange flexible schedules and job-sharing. It also establishes a fund to reimburse employees for adoption costs and provides additional funds for education and child care.

UAW's agreement with Chrysler developed a long-term care pilot program for severely impaired employees, retirees, surviving spouses and eligible dependents. This pilot project covers home assistance that includes home care, respite, adult day care, home -delivered meals, transportation and custodial nursing home care. The program acts as a long-term care resource for referral services.

AFSCME negotiated with the state of Ohio for four weeks of paid leave for births or adoptions for employees working 30 hours or more. To qualify for the wage replacement, employees must wait for an unpaid two-week period until the paid time begins. They are allowed to supplement that two-week period with other forms of paid leave. In addition to paid leave, employees are entitled to up to six months unpaid leave for a birth or adoption.

The union's contract with the state of Massachusetts allows employees to use up to 10 paid sick days a year for adoption or domestic violence abuse.

Pay formulas

BCT gained an ownership stake for Philip Morris employees in the form of a promissory note equal to 35 shares of company common stock for each worker. In February 1996, all employees received the actual shares and any dividends earned.

UNITE ratified a new five-year accord with Hoechst Celanese that includes a profit-sharing program paying up to 7 percent of an employee's annual salary. In addition, a 401(k) saving plan was established, with the employer contributing 50 cents to every employee dollar invested.

The UAW master contract with Deere & Co. switched the formula for profit-sharing with employees from one based on corporate return on equity to one based on corporate return on assets. The agreement also converted the existing incentive plan into one that rewards employees who devise ways to make their workplace more efficient.

The UFCW eliminated a two-tier wage structure at IBP Inc. by negotiating an agreement that gradually reduces the disparity between the tiers over the life of the contract.

Under an innovative contract between the Chicago school board and AFT, teachers will receive wage increases that hinge on the board's ability to pay. The union has the right to reopen the contract to discuss those issues in the last three years. The agreement also provides temporary assignments to teachers who lose jobs through school or program closings — until permanent positions are found.

SEIU members gained a modified COLA clause in their six-year agreement with the cleaning contractors in Detroit. If the cost of living increases by 8 percent or more in any of the final three years of the agreement, the union can reopen talks.

Political action and more

Unions remained focused on the importance of political action, both in existing units and newly organized units.

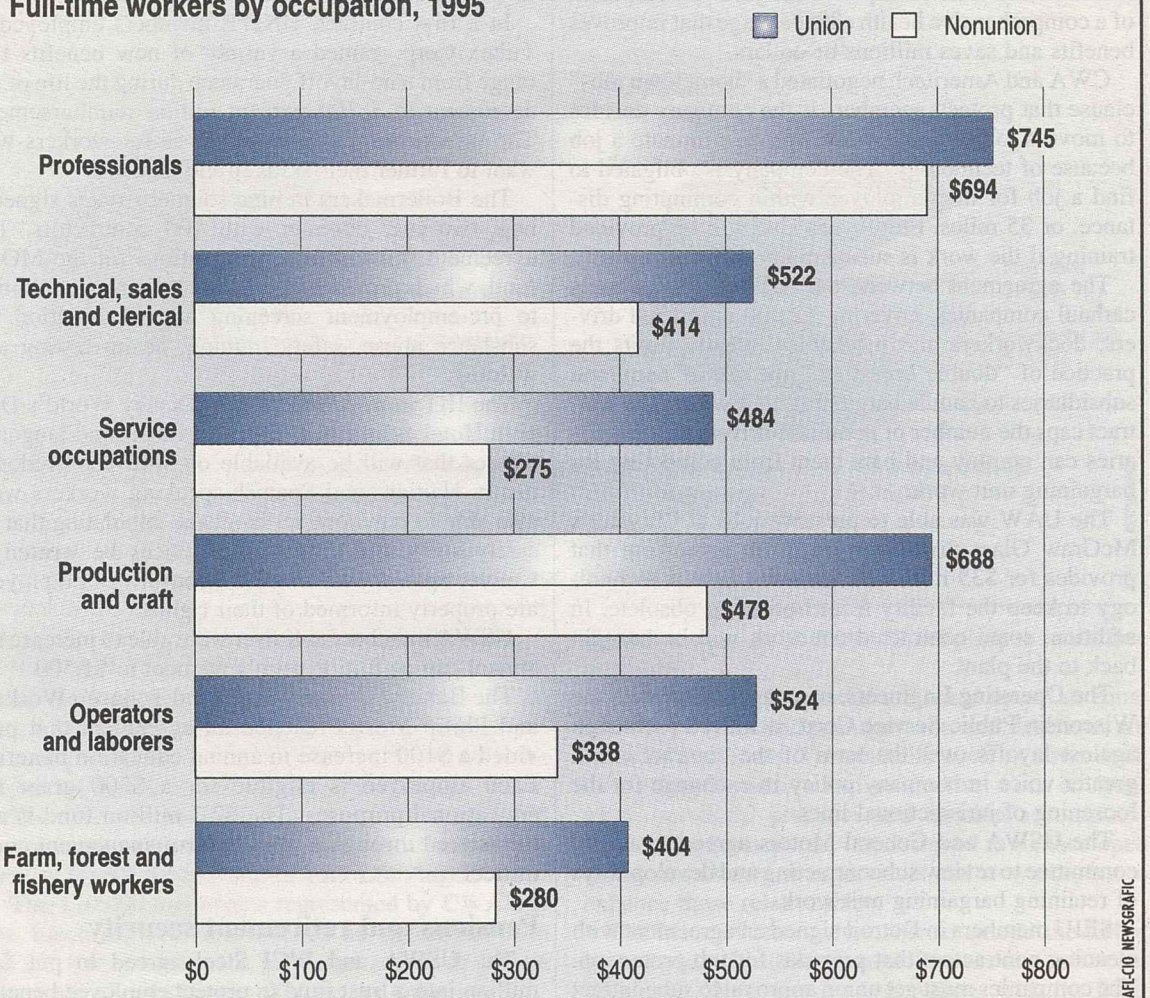
The Farm Workers negotiated a first contract with California's rose growers that, in addition to providing health care coverage to seasonal employees and nine paid holidays, provided for full-time paid union staff to administer the contract. The companies agreed to a "citizen participation day," paying the equivalent of one day's salary for all employees, with the money earmarked for the union's political action fund.

The Flint Glass Workers, IBEW and the unaffiliated United Electrical Workers coordinated bargaining through the IUD to negotiate a multiyear agreement with Philips Lighting. The master agreement established a Political Action Committee checkoff, providing for written authorization from interested employees. The start date was established as September 1995, in time for the critical 1996 elections.

BARGAINING

Median weekly pay: the union advantage

Full-time workers by occupation, 1995

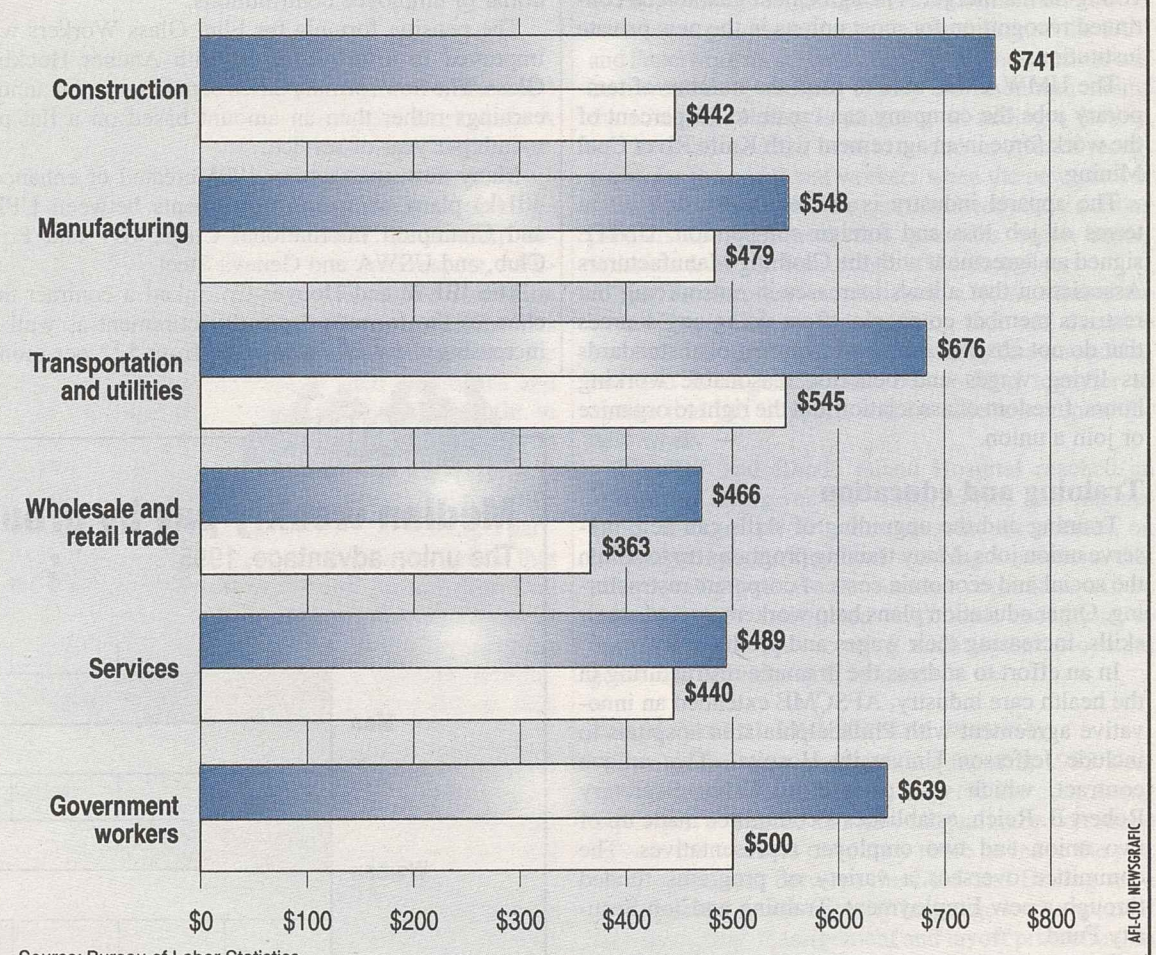


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

BARGAINING

Median weekly pay: the union advantage

Full-time workers by industry, 1995



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Two IUE locals were able to gain check-off clauses in new contracts at Westover Jobs Corps and Leather Center Inc. The clauses will allow members to contribute for political action directly from their paychecks.

Postal settlements

Two of the four unions at the U.S. Postal Service had outstanding issues determined in 1995 through interest arbitration. In separate awards, the Letter Carriers and the Postal Workers, which represent 240,000 and 350,000 employees, respectively, received similar wage packages of lump-sum payments, pay increases and COLA adjustments over four years.

Initial one-time payments for the agreements, which originally expired Nov. 20, 1994, were 2.7 percent of base salary, or $950. Beginning in November 1995, employees received a 1.2 percent wage increase annually, along with a one-time $400 lump-sum payment. The contract expires Nov. 20, 1998. The Mail Handlers, a Laborers' affiliate, currently is in arbitration.

BARGAINING

ALPA, FedEx in agreement

The Air Line Pilots reached a tentative agreement with Federal Express Corp. that features increased compensation and enhanced retirement benefits for 3,000 pilots.

"The new contract addresses our issues while providing management with the cost structure it needs to ensure that FedEx will be the most successful and profitable carrier of its kind worldwide," said Capt. Alan Samford, chairman of ALPA's FedEx Master Executive Council.

The five-year first contract was reached after 16 months of difficult talks and a job action in which pilots refused to work voluntary overtime, slowing down the world's largest express carrier's deliveries during the busy Christmas season.

The tentative pact resolves a "scope" issue relating to the scheduling of bargaining-unit pilots, links some pay raises to corporate profitability and implements work-rule changes. In addition, ALPA has reportedly been assured that only FedEx pilots will be used to fly company jets overseas.

While no date has been set for balloting, the union has indicated it will move expeditiously to present the agreement to the council and to the membership.

Owens Brockway, GMP agree

The Glass, Molders and Pottery Workers approved new parallel three-year contracts with Owens Brockway that will raise wages and increase benefits.

The agreements with the glass manufacturer, based in Toledo, Ohio, cover some 6,000 workers at 20 plants. The pacts replace two that were due to expire March 31. The union bargaining committee ratified the agreements March 7.

Under the agreements, production workers will receive an average hourly wage increase of 45 cents in April, with increases of 36 cents in each of the next two years. Maintenance and automatic-machine operators will get a 40-cent raise and a 30-cent differential in the first year, and 36 cents in each of the next two years.

Workers who sign up for the company 401(k) plan by April 1 also will receive 20 shares of company stock as a ratification bonus. The deals also raise life insurance coverage and company contributions to the 401(k) plan.

The GMP members were able to hold the line against any increases in health care premiums or reduction in quality.

Pact averts Chrysler strike

A last-minute agreement avoided a strike at a Chrysler plant in Detroit and gave workers job security and reduced overtime.

The five-year pact covers about 4,100 workers at the Jefferson North plant, which produces the popular Jeep Cherokee. The model is so popular that employees have been working 7.5-hour days, six days a week, and still have been unable to keep up with demand. Under the new agreement, workers will have the option of taking more time off, according to UAW Local 7 President Frank "Moon" Massey.

Besides overtime, the key issues were outsourcing and job security, Massey said. The union won back many of the jobs that had been outsourced, he said, because many of the workers who helped build the plant now work in it and have the skills necessary to do the job.

The contract, modified March 18, also includes job security for all the workers, Massey said.

Yale strike suspended

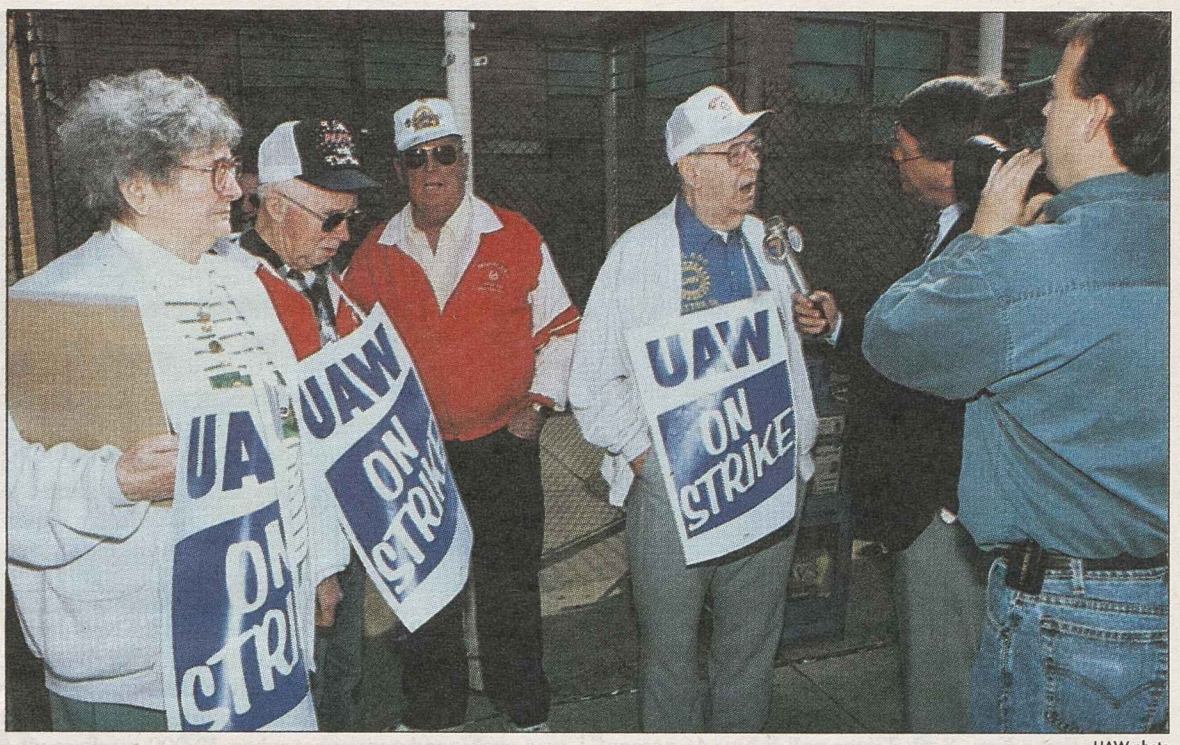
Clerical and technical workers at Yale University returned to work as promised on March 6 after a 30-day strike.

The workers, members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 34, walked off the job Feb. 7 after little progress had been made in contract talks.

The union was supported by 1,100 workers in its sister Local 35 who remained on the job and shared their wages with the striking employees.

Both locals have been in negotiations since Nov. 2. Unless the university and union can negotiate a new contract by March 25, Local 35 is prepared to launch a strike.

"Local 35 has a more direct impact on the students because these are the people that work in the dining halls and maintain the buildings," said HERE spokeswoman Deborah Chernoff. "The university has made a cosmetic move, but they still want to subcontract work," she said.



UAW photo

A TV reporter interviews a striker on the picket line at the GM brake plant in Dayton, Ohio.

Strike puts brakes on pact breaches

Continued from Page 1

The union complained about staffing levels it says has caused overtime and prevented workers from completing safety training. GM also had promised to add several hundred jobs to the Dayton plants in exchange for the ability to outsource, but the jobs never materialized.

"Any underestimation of our resolve on these issues would be a mistake," UAW Vice President Richard Shoemaker had warned during the strike. Shoemaker heads the union's GM department.

The Dayton strike will not have an impact on upcoming negotiations between the UAW and the Big Three automakers set to begin in September, Shoemaker said.

"This has been a local strike over local issues in a plant that is extremely important to the whole GM chain . . . It doesn't set the stage for September. This strike has nothing to do with the forthcoming negotiations," he said.

The agreement was announced March 21 and came after daily negotiations that began March 15, including one session that lasted almost 48 hours. The strike was the UAW's longest against GM since 1970, when the workers were out 68 days.

In a refrain familiar to millions of workers, GM had promised to bring jobs back into the plants. But citing the need to "be competitive," it reneged on the promise and, instead, pushed to send more work outside the plants.

"Unions are fighting as hard as they can to protect jobs because American workers are in a time of crisis," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said on ABC's Good Morning America. "They feel insecure about their jobs, and every one of these situations always reflects some loss of jobs. Here, we have an example of high profitability, high productivity, and yet these jobs are threatened."

Appearing on ABC's Nightline March 20, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka said that "Corporate America has record profits, record productivity, and they tell us that we have to continue to sacrifice like in outsourcing, sacrifice with our jobs."

During the strike, GM laid off about 177,000 employees. But in a cruel twist, the company fought to prevent the laid-off workers from receiving unemployment benefits and refused to pay supplemental benefits.

Despite the impact on other workers, solidarity remained high within the unions. "Everybody understands that keeping a job with a future is important to every American. They are helping their brothers and sisters at these brake and bearings plants," Trumka said in another TV interview.

President Clinton congratulated both sides on the agreement. "When American corporations work together with their workers, we can meet our challenge to grow the economy and provide families higher wages and increased economic security," he said.

Unions are willing to cooperate with management, Trumka said. "We want our companies to do well," he said. "That's job security for us. But we also want our companies to invest in our factories here at home. We want to be the most efficient. Help us. We want your factories to be the most efficient. Don't invest in Mexico. Invest here at home . . . we'll give you the best product at the cheapest price."

BCT, Nabisco make workers central

Building on a seven-year history of cooperation, the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers and Nabisco laid out a plan for a new partnership that puts employees at the center of the work system.

The agreement, signed March 14, includes a joint vision statement for the future at the nation's top cookie and cracker maker, with an accompanying "road map" for achieving it. The agreement is a "renewal and strengthening" of a participative work agreement signed in 1994, but the company and union have been working on ways to solve such problems since 1987, the union said.

The vision statement calls for a manufacturing environment where "jobs and work processes are designed to optimize employee contributions to the company and their own quality of life."

Both sides are dedicated to creating a "flat, nonauthoritarian, cross-functional structure and a work group-based culture that is mutually supportive of company and union goals," the statement said.

The agreement also recognizes job security as a key element in making the partnership successful. "As much as business conditions will allow, no employee will involuntarily lose their employment . . . due to partnership-related work design," the agreement said. The company and the union will establish core employment levels and new methods to "smooth the ups and downs of production cycles."

BCT represents some 5,700 workers at 11 Nabisco plants. They produce Oreo and Chips Ahoy! cookies, Ritz and Premium crackers and SnackWells, as well as Milk Bone pet snacks.

Under the agreement, workers will be able to gain basic technical and social skills to perform their current jobs, and learn how to cope with new and existing technologies. The agreement also emphasizes collective participation in day-to-day decision-making, as well as an exchange of information across all lines and functions.

Nabisco further agreed to remain neutral in future BCT organizing efforts at any new company bakeries.

"The agreement solidifies our longstanding relationship with Nabisco and continues a 'win-win' opportunity that stretches back across the years. It is a plus for both parties," said BCT President Frank Hurt.

The process and resulting agreement will "make jobs and save jobs into the next century," said BCT Secretary-Treasurer Gene McDonald, who heads cookie and cracker negotiations for the union.

— James B. Parks

Jobs numbers up, but economic weaknesses persist

By David Kameras

The unemployment rate took a sharp turn south in February as President Clinton celebrated his delivery on one of his key 1992 campaign promises — 8 million new jobs.

"It is a tribute to the hard work, ingenuity and strength of the American people that our economy has created more than 8 million jobs in just three years instead of four," he said.

Yet "even as we celebrate the creation of 8.4 million jobs, we must ensure that our economy is working for all of our working families," Clinton said, pointing to the continuing stagnation of earnings and the growing wage gap between the rich and working families.

That widening income inequality is feeding a wave of political discontent, as is the continuing surge of major layoffs, which has kept survivors wondering whether their turn will come next.

More than 43 million jobs have disappeared since 1979, one-third of the number existing today. Little wonder that a New York Times poll shows 46 percent of workers very worried or somewhat worried that they or someone in their household will be out of work in the next 12 months. Seventy-two percent of respondents said they or someone close to them had been affected by a layoff.

In addition, a Business Week/Harris Poll reveals that 78 percent of Americans rate large companies fair or poor on loyalty to workers, and a whopping 95 percent believe corporations should be willing to sacrifice some profits to help their workers and communities.

"No one should lose a job for short-term considerations that are not necessary for the long-term well-being of the enterprise," Clinton said in a speech in Detroit.

The consulting firm of Challenger, Gray & Christmas reported layoff announcements in February affecting 33,830, up 9.3 percent from a year earlier. That follows an astonishing 97,379 job losses announced in January, a two-year record.

Leading the pack were newly merged Pharmacia & Upjohn Inc. (4,000 jobs), Mobil Corp. (up to 3,000 jobs) and Anheuser-Busch Cos. (1,750 jobs). Also slated for jobs lost are DuPont Corp. (800), Freightliner Corp. in Portland, Ore. (666), and the New Jersey Department of Corrections (340), which is privatizing prison medical care. An earlier announcement by AT&T that it would reduce its work force by 40,000 was cushioned somewhat when 12,000 workers who otherwise would be laid off accepted voluntary buyout offers or found other work within the company.

The ubiquitous sense of job insecurity also has made organizing more challenging, as workers fear consequences from letting their union sympathies be known.

"Our country is built on the premise of being a free country," Rep. Bernard Sanders (I-Vt.) said during a recent hearing of the House Progressive Caucus. "The fact that people are scared to death of joining a union for fear of losing their jobs is not what America is about."

The unemployment rate last month dropped from 5.8 percent to 5.5 percent, still roughly within the range it has been in since late 1994. The 705,000 increase in payroll jobs followed a decline of 188,000 in January, a month marked by unusually severe weather conditions in the East. "The data indicates considerable strength for the month of February, but it may be affected by the earlier snow and seasonal factors," said AFL-CIO chief economist Rudy Oswald.

Although the official number of unemployed was 7.4 million, an additional 4.5 million were involuntarily employed part time and 1.7 million had given up their search after looking for and not finding work — for a total of 13.6 million affected by partial or total unemployment.

The service industry registered the strongest gain, up 287,000. Retail trade grew by 166,000 jobs, mostly in restaurants and fast-food facilities, and construction rose by 120,000. While government jobs grew by 42,000, the federal sector continued to shrink, losing 5,000 positions.

"Over the past year, employment was up by 1,750,000, but manufacturing continued to lose 265,000 jobs," Oswald noted. "Since the recovery began in March 1991, the job growth was 9.5 million, but manufacturing is down 215,000."

Jobless reductions in February were scored by women (5.1 percent to 4.8 percent), teenagers (18.2 percent to 16.6 percent), adult women (5.1 percent to 4.8 percent), whites (5 percent to 4.9 percent), white adult women (4.4 percent to 4.3 percent), white teenagers (15.1 percent to 13.4 percent), African-Americans (10.6 percent to 10.3 percent) and African-American adult women (9.1 percent to 7.8 percent). The unemployment rate remained steady for men (4.9 percent) and rose for white adult men (4.2 percent to 4.3 percent), African-American adult men (9 percent to 10.1 percent), African-American teenagers (30.4 percent to 33.6 percent) and Hispanics (9.2 percent to 9.7 percent).

New jobless measure gives bigger picture

The federal government has begun reporting an official alternative unemployment rate that takes into account discouraged workers, all other "marginally attached" workers and persons working part time for economic reasons.

The new reporting system was urged by the AFL-CIO and other members of the Americans for Democratic Action's First Friday coalition.

Using a methodology formally called "U-6," the new data will provide a broader, more representative picture of those facing the uncertainties of an imperfect economy. In February, for example, the alternative rate of all those affected was 10.7 percent, nearly double the 5.5 percent conventional rate.

The First Friday campaign was launched in 1984 to promote awareness of the real rate as calculated according to ADA's methodology, essentially the same as the U-6 rate. The name is derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' practice of usually releasing employment data on that day of the month.

With the BLS officially blessing the more precise measurement, the AFL-CIO hopes the media will begin to tell the whole story.

Truckers pledge multinational effort on NAFTA

Chicago

Representatives of millions of truck drivers and freight workers in the United States, Canada and Mexico have adopted an action plan to maintain the blockade against implementing cross-border trucking provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which would hurt jobs, highway safety and the environment.

Meeting participants announced stepped-up membership education, outreach to nonmember drivers and the general public, plus a cooperative political action strategy targeting members of Congress who support the provisions.

"NAFTA threatens jobs and highway safety in all three countries. It's time for truckers to unite," Teamsters President Ron Carey said.

"Our fight is not with each other," he said. "Our fight is against corporate greed that is destroying jobs and wages on both sides of the border."

"Truck drivers can't continue to go it alone against the corporate interests that are behind NAFTA," agreed Jim Johnston, president of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association.

"These corporations care about short-term profits and have little or no regard for highway safety or job security."

The March 13 NAFTA Truckers' Summit marks the first time that union and independent trucking groups from the three countries have joined forces to address these issues.

Included in the adopted program are:

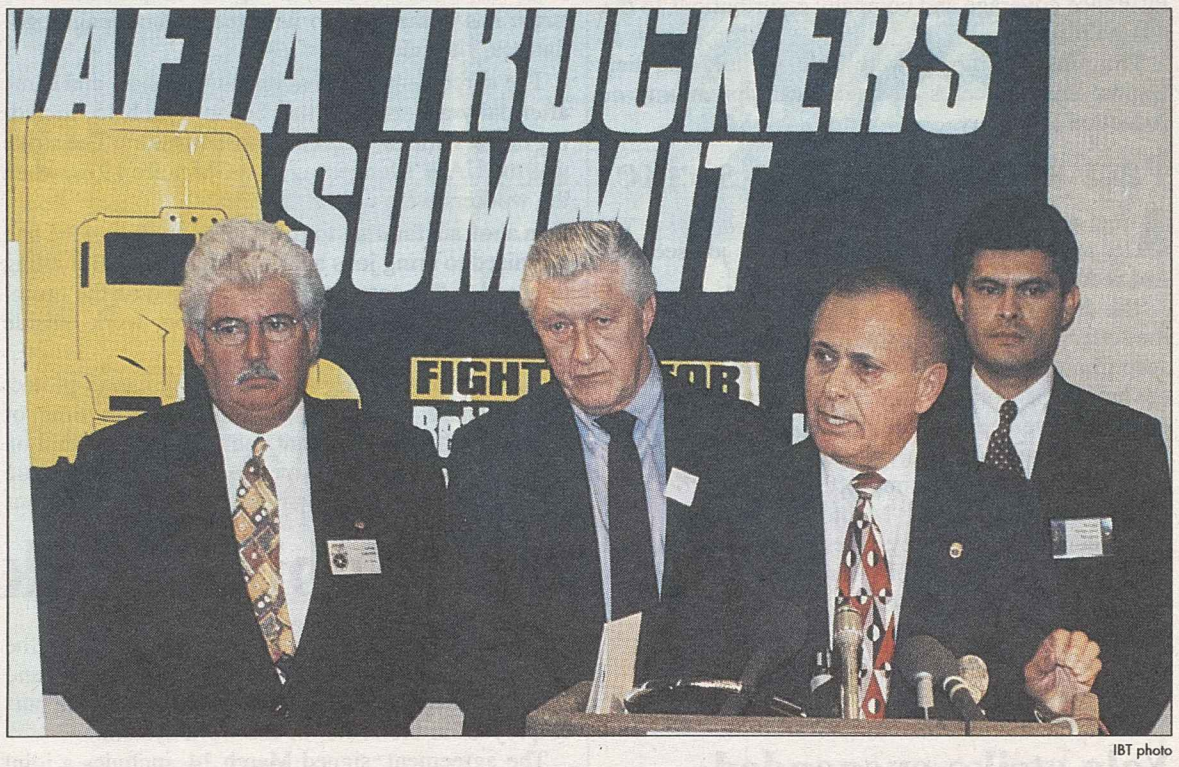
- A plan by IBT and OOIDA to reach millions of workers with educational palm cards and messages on the Internet and CB radio. Their Canadian counterparts produced a similar plan.
- Full-page joint advertisements to appear in major U.S. and Canadian trucker publications.
- Grass-roots political action, with lobbying supported by radio spots in key congressional districts.
- A full-page IBT ad placed in Mexico's largest independent daily newspaper calling for coordinated efforts by working families in all three NAFTA countries to win better living standards, while decrying the scapegoating of immigrants.
- Research projects conducted jointly with IBT and Mexican trade unions to support organizing and contract campaigns. New research indicates that U.S. freight companies are rapidly expanding operations in Mexico.

Plans to open the border to competition in trucking were temporarily delayed last December by Transportation Secretary Federico Peña after a storm of protests from the IBT and other labor, highway safety and environmental groups. "We got in their face and told them there had to be changes," Carey said.

"International solidarity is the most powerful weapon that working people have to resist attacks by transnational employers," said IBT Canada President Louis Lacroix.

"From this point forward, we'll make sure that our voices are heard, not just the voice of the big business," added Alfredo Dominguez of the Frente Autentico del Trabajo, on behalf of the participating Mexican trade unionists. "We need a common set of standards to force big corporations to play by rules that benefit all workers."

— David Kameras



IBT photo

Teamsters President Ron Carey is joined by, from left, IBT Canada President Louis Lacroix; Jim Johnston, president of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association; and Reyes Soberanis, general secretary of Mexico's National Transportation Union, as they pledged to act against NAFTA rules.

Executive order ruling appealed

The Clinton administration has asked a federal appeals court to reconsider the president's executive order barring federal agencies from doing business with companies that replace striking workers.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for District of Columbia Circuit struck down the order Feb. 2, saying it violates federal labor law that allows replacements. The administration is asking the full court to rehear the case.

"The executive order is fair and based on a proper reading of the president's procurement authority," Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich said. "Strikes involving replacement workers are long, bitter and pose a threat to federal procurement. I am confident that the court will ultimately reconsider its ruling and uphold the president's executive order."

The fight against the executive order is being led by the Chamber of Commerce and several businesses, including Bridgestone/Firestone, which could lose millions in federal contracts if the order is allowed to stand.

NEWSMAKERS

Service Employees President **Richard W. Cordtz** said he will not seek re-election and will retire next month after serving the union in various capacities for almost 50 years. Cordtz, 74, was elected president last December after SEIU head **John J. Sweeney** was elected president of the AFL-CIO. Sweeney praised Cordtz for helping to build SEIU into the third-largest and fastest-growing union in the country, saying Cordtz "did far more than his share of heavy lifting that made it possible."

Cordtz's announcement apparently clears the way for **Andy Stern**, 45, to take the union's top post. Stern, a vice president and organizing director, had announced that he will run for the presidency on a ticket with Secretary-Treasurer **Betty Bednarczyk**. The new president will be elected at the SEIU convention to be held April 22-25 in Chicago.

Ida Castro has been named acting director of the Labor Department's Women's Bureau. She replaces **Karen Nussbaum**, who is heading the AFL-CIO's new Working Women's Department. Castro had been serving as the department's acting deputy solicitor. She faces Senate confirmation before the appointment is finalized.

Michigan AFL-CIO President **Frank Garrison** is resting comfortably after undergoing a triple bypass. It was the second heart surgery in 16 years for Garrison, 61, who underwent a double bypass in March 1980.

Jim Grossfeld, 39, was named executive speechwriter for AFSCME. Grossfeld has been the Mine Workers' director of communications.

Kathleen Yasuda was elected president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, succeeding **Ed Miyakawa,** who retired last year as vice president of Food and Commercial Workers Local 770. She is the first woman to head the L.A. APALA chapter and has been an organizer for four years with AFSCME's United Nurses Association of California.

Karen Ackerman and **Jim Thompson** have joined the AFL-CIO's Political Department. Ackerman, 48, who will be Labor '96 staff director, most recently was chief of staff for Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-N.Y.). She spent 20 years working in the labor movement with the UAW, Communication Workers, Public Employee Federation and the Service Employees. Thompson, 29, most recently worked with the Democratic National Committee Campaign Division.

AWARDS

AFL-CIO President **John J. Sweeney** was presented the presidential leadership award by the Older Women's League for a lifetime commitment of bringing women into the labor movement. Also honored were **Rep. Lynn Woolsey** (D-Calif.), **Levi Strauss**, the **Pension Rights Center** and the **Beardstown Ladies**. OWL is the nation's only grass-roots organization that addresses the special needs of mid-life and older women.

Bobbie J. Creque, an AFL-CIO community services liaison, was awarded the Henry M. Smith Award for her contributions to the United Way of America.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper



Daymon J. Hartley/Detroit Sunday Journal

Community activist Rudy Simons is arrested during a peaceful demonstration March 6 by Readers United in support of striking Detroit newspaper employees. Scores of community supporters have been arrested.

Detroit campaign is national cause

South Florida unionists asked to drop Herald

By James B. Parks

The AFL-CIO's national campaign on behalf of striking Detroit newspaper workers is quickly gaining steam as community groups in Michigan and Florida take up the cause for a fair contract.

A letter to union members in South Florida by the AFL-CIO's executive officers asked for support of the strikers by canceling subscriptions to The Miami Herald, the top publication of Knight-Ridder, publisher of the Detroit Free Press. Unionists also are continuing a campaign against USA TODAY, the flagship of Gannett, publisher of the Detroit News.

The Executive Council at its winter meeting authorized use of the COPE list in South Florida for a mailing to ask subscribers to cancel the Herald. Strikers from Detroit are rotating 10-day shifts in Miami staffing phone banks, along with labor activists in the area.

"We're winning this strike," said Shawn Ellis, a striking Teamster now helping spread the strikers' message in South Florida. "People realize what these two large corporations are doing. They have stripped the community of 2,500 good jobs and stripped the readers of two quality newspapers."

The strikers are letting people in South Florida know that "they're suffering as well," Ellis said. The Miami Herald has cut back some 350 jobs trying to recoup losses from the Detroit strike, he said.

In Detroit, police arrested 44 women, including a member of the city council and a former state senator, who were peacefully demonstrating in front of the Detroit News building March 14. They were part of about 300 women who took part in a prayer vigil organized by Readers United, an independent citizens group that supports the strikers.

"Ending this strike with a just contract is very important," said Lana Pollack, a former state senator and U.S. Senate candidate. "It's also important to bring an arrogant corporate empire to accountability under the law. We need to put strength back into our labor laws so that we have a level playing field."

Pollack was one of the demonstrators arrested, along with Gloria Cobbin, an AFSCME vice president and former school board member, Detroit City Councilwoman Sheila Cockrel and Gloria Woods, president of the Michigan branch of the National Organization for Women. Scores of community supporters have been arrested, including Douglas Fraser, former UAW president, who was arrested March 21.

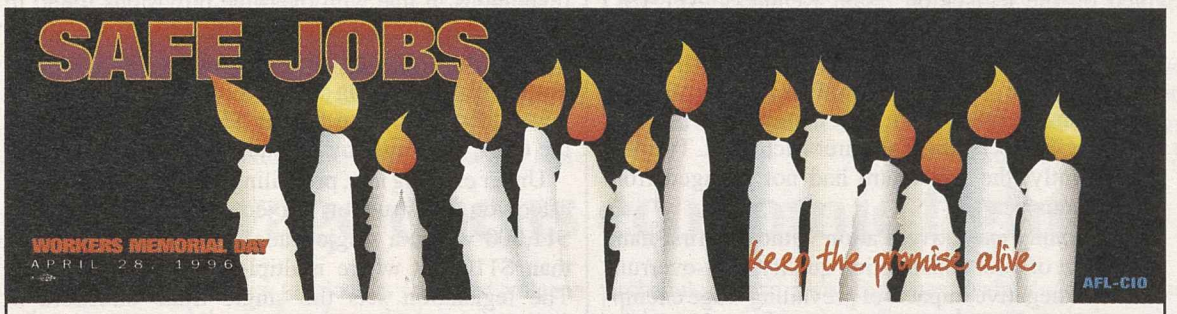
The National Labor Relations Board has filed unfair labor practice complaints against the newspapers for failing to bargain in good faith and threatening to replace workers involved in an unfair labor practice strike. Hearings on the complaints are scheduled to begin March 25.

The employees of the News and Free Press have been on strike since July 13 after negotiations failed to produce a new agreement. Management and imported scabs from other papers are producing the newspapers. Hired union-busting security goons from Vance and Huffmaster are delivering the papers.

A coalition of sports fans in Broward County, Fla., announced they will no longer buy The Miami Herald because Knight-Ridder CEO Tony Ridder is leading the effort to prevent two of Miami's professional sports teams, the NBA Heat and the NHL Panthers, from moving to the county.

Meanwhile, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement blasted Knight-Ridder for its "two-faced policy toward the Cuban-American community." In the Herald, which has many Cuban-American readers, the company showed sensitivity by calling on the Clinton administration to show strength in its response to the Cuban government's downing of U.S. civilian planes.

But the Free Press, in an editorial, warned that the administration "should not let its policy be held any more hostage to the Cuban-exile community than is already the case."



This April 28th, the 8th annual observance of Workers Memorial Day, marks the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the nation's landmark job safety legislation in which Congress promised every American worker the right to a safe job.

Now, with that promise under dire threat from extremists in Congress, workers and their families are being asked to get their employers and members of Congress to sign a special pledge that says: "I support the principles for safe jobs set forth above and pledge to work to improve safety and health protection for American working men and women and to keep the promise of safe jobs alive."

Other Workers Memorial Day activity includes petition-signing, letter-writing or phone campaigns to members of Congress; public meetings with congressional representatives; moments of silence at the workplace; rallies, marches or memorial services to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice on the job; letters to the editor of the local newspaper or ads; or calls into talk radio shows.

The AFL-CIO Department of Occupational Safety and Health has information and materials to help workers plan their events. Materials include ad slicks, stickers, a poster, flier and pledge sheets. Phone 202/637-5367 or FAX 202/508-6978; or visit the World Wide Web site at www.aflcio.org.

Bridgestone faces worldwide worker solidarity

By James B. Parks

More than 1,000 Steelworkers and supporters from other unions around the world put Bridgestone/Firestone on notice that they intend to stay the course until a fair contract is signed.

"Give them their damn jobs back. That's what we want," said USWA President George Becker as he kicked off the first World Conference on Bridgestone/Firestone — a gathering of unions from around the globe representing employees of the Japanese tiremaker.

The USWA and Bridgestone/Firestone have been unable to reach agreement on a contract since July 1994, when 4,000 workers walked off the job. The workers suspended the strike after 10 months. During the strike, Bridgestone/Firestone hired 2,300 replacement workers.

At issue is the rehiring of 700 to 800 strikers. Becker said all should be rehired with back pay and benefits.

Vic Thorpe, general secretary of the 21-million-member International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, which co-sponsored the conference with USWA, said the union leaders showed up in Nashville "to see that Bridgestone/Firestone workers get a fair deal."

"We are frankly shocked at the methods the multinational company has chosen to operate here in the United States," Thorpe said.

"You can't win this struggle alone," Becker said. "These companies are too big, too powerful. They have the resources of nations behind them. The only way to beat them is by making this a worldwide struggle."

"Banding together is the only way labor unions worldwide can survive," Thorpe said. "Corporate decisions float free of national boundaries. Somehow we have to tie them down to working people in the communities where these companies operate."

After the rally, the marchers set up "Camp Justice," a tent city at the entrance to the office park complex where the headquarters is located. The camp will be occupied 24 hours a day by USWA members from the five locations where scabs have taken jobs — Oklahoma City; Akron, Ohio; Decatur, Ill.; Des Moines, Iowa; and Noblesville, Ind.

"We're going to sit in their face one day longer than it takes to win this battle, and get a fair contract," said Ron Holder of USWA Local 1055 from the Bridgestone plant in LaVergne, Tenn.

The world conference urged Bridgestone "to return immediately to the bargaining table and to negotiate a reasonable and just contract with USWA."

The resolution also asks trade unionists throughout the world to "call on their members to participate in an international day of action that will include brief work stoppages, demonstrations inside and outside Bridgestone facilities, and other solidarity activities as a first step in concerted action."

Becker, speaking at the rally, called the practice of replacing striking workers with scabs the "shame of America."

Bridgestone's power is "awesome," but the union will ultimately prevail, he said. "The fight is going to be won in the court of world opinion when workers all over the world have banded together and ostracized Bridgestone/Firestone the way they deserve to be. If ever there was a fight our union was determined to win, this is the fight."



Photo by John Sommers II

Ron Cyrus, executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky AFL-CIO, thanks Gov. Paul Patton after he signs a new prevailing wage law that had been a top priority for organized labor in the state for 15 years.

Statehouse fights yield wage wins

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Two recent initiatives on prevailing wages demonstrate that common sense and worker persistence can pay off in the legislative arena.

In Kentucky, a new governor elected with strong union backing restored the state's prevailing wage law, a priority for organized labor for 15 years. And, in Wisconsin, the legislature passed a bill that improves prevailing wage calculations.

"This victory was the epitome of a genuine team effort — evidenced by the presence of union members in committee meetings during discussion of the bill and filling the Senate gallery the day that chamber voted on the legislation," said Kentucky AFL-CIO Executive Secretary-Treasurer Ron Cyrus.

Also instrumental was Gov. Paul Patton (D), who came to office in November after an open-throttle labor push that featured an 11th hour blitz of the state by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka. Significantly, the legislature had not changed from the previous year.

As a county executive, Patton witnessed first-hand the impact of poor construction quality, cost-overruns and other negative impacts of prevailing wage exemptions. That experience convinced him that restoring the prevailing wage would benefit Kentucky.

State legislators were pressed by workers from every corner of the state — with phone calls during the legislative session and personal lobbying in home districts on weekends and legislative holidays.

The Kentucky law restores the prevailing wage to most state and local government and school construction projects. It also reduces the prevailing wage threshold from about $400,000 to $250,000 per project and prohibits subdividing total projects into many small projects to keep jobs under the prevailing wage threshold.

The House passed the bill by a 51-45 vote, and the Senate, 21-15.

Opposition to the legislation came from the League of Cities, the Kentucky Association of Counties and organizations representing school superintendents. Many of the city, county and school officials used tax dollars for dues to these organizations, Cyrus said.

"In effect, union dues were pitted against tax dollars in this fight," he said. "A portion of workers' personal taxable income actually helped finance lobbying efforts to defeat the measure and they had absolutely no voice in the matter."

Meanwhile, in Wisconsin, the methods for determining prevailing wages for state and local construction projects would improve under a bill passed by the legislature. The measure would bring prevailing wage regulations in line with overtime provisions found in some building trades union contracts.

When no one trade has a majority of the jobs on a project, the prevailing wage would be determined by a weighted average of the top 51 percent of wages in the class, measured by the number of hours worked.

Under existing law, prevailing wage provisions take effect on construction projects costing more than $11,000 where a single trade is involved, and more than $110,000 where multiple trades are involved. The legislation sets the single trade threshold at $30,000 and the multiple trade threshold at $150,000.

The legislation also defines a single-trade project as one in which at least 85 percent of the cost of the project is attributable to one trade.

The new legislation would allow employers to pay for four 10-hour days at straight time, and would require time-and-a-half for overtime after 10 hours on Monday through Friday, after 40 hours a week, and for all work on Saturday, Sunday and six holidays.

"It's going to greatly help our members," said Ted Kuczynski, president of Sheet Metal Workers Local 18 and chair of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO Building Trades Committee. "It's a fair and equitable wage determination with some changes that were desperately needed to our existing law."

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UNION YES

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Workers seek renewed commitment to job safety on 25th anniversary of OSHA. **See story, Page 3.**

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 7 APRIL 1, 1996

Unions back Clinton, 'raise' political ante

Issues-based drive puts workers first

By Michael Byrne

Delegates to an historic special convention enthusiastically endorsed President Clinton and threw down the gauntlet to extremist congressional Republicans by funding a massive $35 million mobilization of workers in 1996.

The unprecedented labor campaign will inject worker issues into the national political debate, revolving around the theme, "America Needs a Raise." That message, on the backdrop behind the podium, reverberated in speeches throughout the convention.

"We're going to tell the truth about the wage and wealth gap in this country, and frankly, that is what this is all about," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said. "This political year isn't about a lack of money. No, this is about who gets the money."

AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee, chairman of the Executive Council's Political Education Committee, predicted that "this marks the first day when the sleeping giant starts to move. Our enemy can hear our footsteps," he said, pointing to ominous warnings by Republican House leaders Newt Gingrich (Ga.) and Richard Armey (Texas) that they would seek legislation to limit labor's legislative and political action. **(See story, Page 3)**.

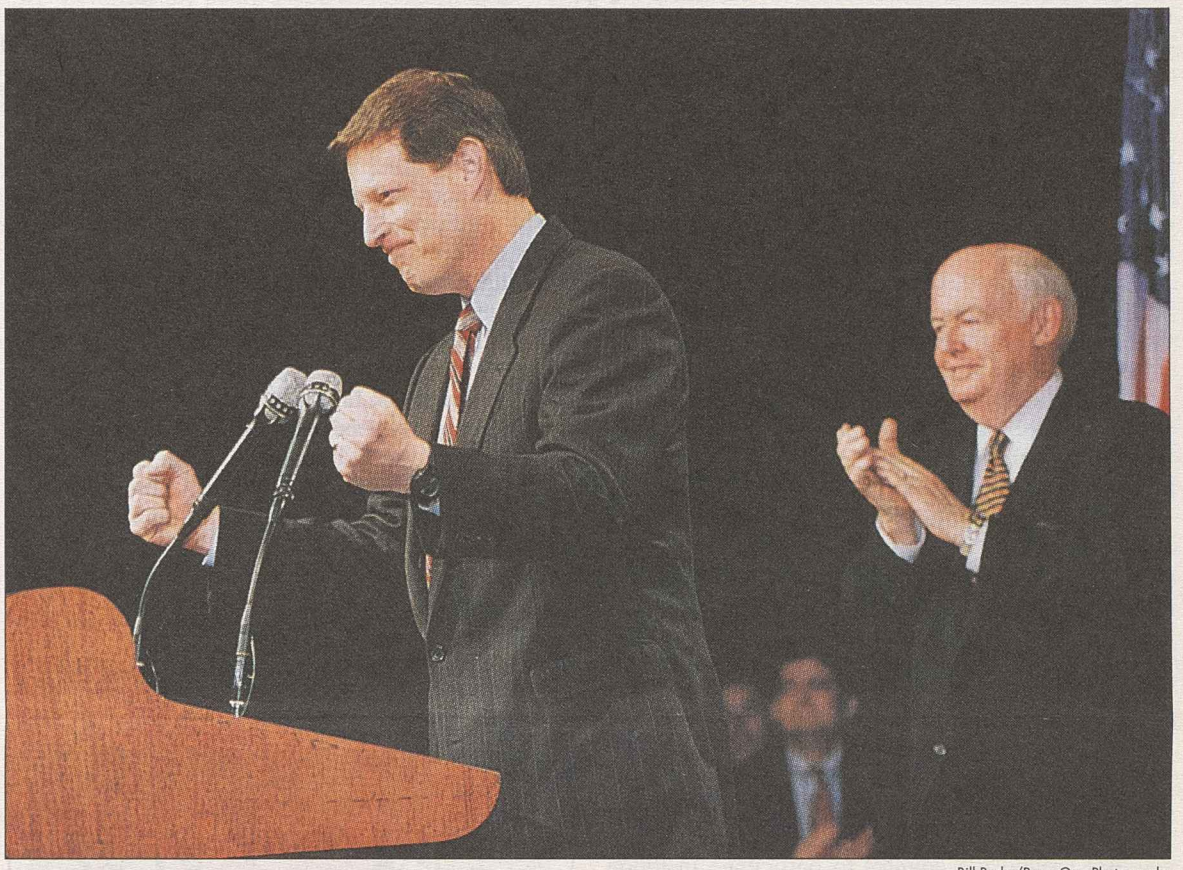
Sweeney predicted the Republicans would intensify their efforts "to discredit unions, vilify union leaders and destroy the morale of union members . . . the radical right-wingers in Congress hope to conceal their illegal acts and nefarious activities by falsely accusing labor."

A resolution passed by the convention painted this bleak portrait of working families: "Loaded with debt and threatened by downsizing, outsourcing and a growing pool of low-wage, no-benefit contingent labor, American workers are frustrated, anxious and angry.

"Incredibly, it is against this backdrop," the resolution stated, "that conservative members of Congress have launched a broad assault against federal laws and agencies which enhance wages and income security, protect worker health and safety, create and improve jobs, and defend the rights of workers to form and join unions."

Workers' stories were told vividly by union members in video interviews and by three workers introduced by Sweeney: Kathleen Mazzi, a Communications Worker and career employee at AT&T, who told of life in the

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Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Vice President Gore's pledge to fight for working families cheers AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

Members guide unions' endorsement

By James B. Parks

Heralding a new day for working people and a new process for union political action, the AFL-CIO endorsed President Clinton and Vice President Gore for re-election.

"America's working families have never faced a greater challenge — or had a greater opportunity to make a difference politically," a resolution passed by the March 25 special convention declared. "We see our friends and neighbors losing jobs, homes and dignity, or struggling with little success to keep up with higher prices on steadily eroding wages.

"Against this bleak backdrop, we know our choice of political leaders is more important than ever before, and nowhere is the choice more critical or more clear than between the candidates running for president," it said.

The federation's endorsement of Clinton and Gore is a signal that labor is "doing things differently when it comes to politics," Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka said in introducing the resolution. The decision to endorse Clinton came after extensive use of focus groups and polling of union members to ensure the federation was responding to the wishes of members, he said.

After 14 months of radical Republican rule in Congress, polls show workers moving to Clinton. Sixty-nine percent of union members approve of the job Clinton is doing, and 60 percent said they would support him for re-election, while only 29 percent said they would not, according to a poll by Peter D. Hart Research Associates Inc.

In a head-to-head race with Republican nominee Sen. Robert Dole (Kan.), Clinton garnered 67 percent, up from 54 percent in April 1995 and 60 percent in

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Cheap shot at minimum wage opens economic fight

By David Kameras

As the AFL-CIO prepared to take its message that "America Needs a Raise" on the road, Congress helped to delineate the issue by sidetracking a bill to increase the federal minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 over two years.

Senate Democrats seeking to attach S. 413, the Working Wage Increase Act, to a noncontroversial bill failed to block a Republican filibuster March 28, even with the help of eight defections from the GOP camp. House members later turned their backs on working Americans by voting 192-228 against considering a minimum wage measure that Democrats were trying to attach to a debt ceiling bill.

Two days earlier, Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.), the Republican presidential candidate, used procedural tactics to block a recorded vote on the measure and then refused to schedule a later vote.

"The day that Bob Dole locks up the Republican nomination, he locks out working families that are looking for a very modest increase in the minimum wage," noted Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), who had offered the measure.

For his part, Dole paid a backhanded compliment to the AFL-CIO, grumbling that Democrats were bringing up the bill to appease the federation, which one day earlier had authorized a massive political campaign around the wage issue.

"Last night on television, (Dole) said the battle for America's future was beginning," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka said after the senator bottled up the minimum wage bill. "By his refusal to schedule a vote, Sen. Dole has made it clear that his definition of America's future doesn't include working families, who are under attack as never before."

GOP members "are doing procedural pirouettes to avoid a real debate and preventing the public from seeing where they really stand on this issue," said Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich.

For the record, joining all the Democrats in seeking a vote on the issue in the Senate were Republicans William Cohen (Maine), Alphonse D'Amato (N.Y.), Jim Jeffords (Vt.), Mark Hatfield (Ore.), William Roth (Del.), Rick Santorum (Pa.), Olympia Snowe (Maine) and Arlen Specter (Pa.).

The federation has announced it will hold a series of town hall meetings around the country this spring,

Continued on Page 5

AFGE speaks, workers listen

Shutdowns, false image spur organizing, politics

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Anger over the U.S. government shutdowns and unfair criticism of federal workers has given AFGE an opportunity to gain more members while mobilizing for the 1996 political campaign.

"Every time we sign up a new member we will register them to vote," AFGE President John N. Sturdivant said during a March 20 news briefing. "The shutdown has taught us some hard political lessons that we won't soon forget."

The federal shutdowns fired the passion that federal workers have for the work they perform for the American people into the campaign to bring about change and gain power, Sturdivant declared. "We're using this passion to build real political power because we will remember in November," he said.

Beginning April 1, through its "Bonus Bucks/Passion and Power" campaign, AFGE will offer cash incentives for current members to recruit new members in a special organizing drive. The campaign will build the union's strength, Sturdivant said, and also offer federal employees a vehicle to become more politically active.

AFGE members also are committed to this campaign because they are tired of politicians complaining that they are incompetent and unproductive, Sturdivant said.

Federal workers are "passionate" about the programs they administer, he said, citing as an example workers at a Social Security office he had visited that was full of employees working overtime on a Saturday to catch up on their work.

AFGE is using its newspaper, newsletters, a manual and a videotape to educate its members about the union's political campaign. A recent edition of the union's Momentum newsletter outlined the members' political rights, enacted as part of Hatch Act reform in 1994. Prior to the passage of the reform, federal workers were prohibited from participating in federal politics.

Now federal workers are free to run for public office, participate in voter registration drives, join and become active in political parties, attend rallies and political meetings and express opinions about candidates.

The union's political campaign will be nonpartisan and based on issues, Sturdivant explained. "Even when you have friends, you will have disagreements."

In fact, he said, the union named President Clinton as the defendant in a lawsuit filed in federal court in Columbus, Ohio, on March 18.

The lawsuit alleges that core work at Newark, Kelly and McClellan Air Force bases is being illegally privatized at great risk to the country's national security. Clinton was named, Sturdivant said, because he directed the Defense Department to disregard the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's established procedures and prevailing law to speed up the privatization.

The suit claims the administration has violated provisions that require allowing bids for the work to be submitted by other depots and Defense Department facilities, not just private contractors.

The union also is concerned about efforts to "reinvent" the federal government, Sturdivant said. Addressing a March 25 conference on that effort, Sturdivant praised federal employees and the Clinton administration for the progress that already has been made.

"The success or failure of every government endeavor ultimately depends on the skill, dedication and motivation of the federal work force. Unlike many previous government reformers, the Clinton-Gore administration did not see the federal employee as an obstacle on the road to change."

The conference was convened by the National Performance Review and Vice President Gore.

Union Summer beginning to blossom

Union summer officially opened its headquarters March 25 with a campaign-style storefront in the lobby of the AFL-CIO.

The campaign plans to send hundreds of young activists around the country to participate in union organizing drives.

The program was introduced to delegates of the AFL-CIO special convention March 25 with a video presentation and speech by Organizing Director Richard Bensinger, who described "a tremendous buzz and excitement" among young people in union halls and college campuses.

"There is a sense of hope about a labor movement that is looking inwardly and honestly about itself, and rethinking itself, and about ready to take on a lot of the major problems of society," he said.

Andy Levin, the project director, said the federation is focusing on recruiting daughters and sons of union members and young adult union members. "We see this as a great political opportunity for young union members," he said.

"Local unions who want to increase their volunteer organizing committees or hone skills of younger workers should encourage their members to apply," Levin said. "We are encouraging locals to help their members by giving them the time to participate and/or by making up the difference in salary." Union Summer workers will be paid a $210-per-week stipend.



The program had received about 400 applications through mid-March and is receiving about 80 new applications a week. While applications will be taken all summer, applicants wanting to participate in the June session are urged to get their paperwork in by April 15.

The three-week sessions are scheduled from late May through Labor Day. Site selections will be announced throughout the summer, with the first announcement expected in April.

Those wanting more information should call 800/952-2550.

— Muriel H. Cooper

NLRB, AFL-CIO argue case for single-unit rule

The National Labor Relations Board and the AFL-CIO defended an agency proposal to set standards on which workplaces are "single units" for purposes of union elections and collective bargaining.

"The change we have made is that we are, for the first time, being precise, so that the average person, as well as the lawyer, can know . . . their rights and responsibilities" under labor law, NLRB Chairman William B. Gould IV told the House Small Business subcommittee on regulation and paperwork.

The AFL-CIO strongly supports the proposal. If it is adopted, "a large class of workers will be allowed to vote on a workplace basis if they choose," said Peter J. Ford, assistant general counsel of the Food and Commercial Workers, speaking for the federation.

Letting the workers vote after a workplace meets NLRB standards for single-unit bargaining, Ford said, would "foster the central purpose" of labor law, which is "to protect and facilitate employees' opportunity to organize unions to represent them in collective bargaining."

Under its proposal, first unveiled almost two years ago, the NLRB would set standards for automatically determining whether a workplace is a single unit for organizing and elections. Those standards would affect establishments where the workplace is at least a mile away from other workplaces the employer controls; has at least 15 workers and a supervisor regularly present for much of the time; and trades few workers with the employer's other workplaces.

The proposal came under fire from business groups, led by restaurants and retailers. They want to force unions to organize all the stores in a large chain — for example, McDonald's — or none at all.

Right now, there is no standard for single units. Unions routinely call workplaces single units and employers challenge such rulings, delaying elections for years. In more than 70 percent of the cases, the NLRB rules the workplaces involved are single units anyway, Gould told the subcommittee.

Ford gave an example from his own union of what happens under the present system — that employer challenges mock the intent of labor law.

In April 1983, UFCW Local 27 sought an election in the unit covering 140 service and maintenance workers at a Manor Healthcare nursing home in Rossville, Md. Manor Healthcare replied that the unit also should include workers at two of its other nursing homes, each 12 miles away.

One day before the election, the NLRB agreed to hear the case. It postponed the election, but did not hear the case for four years. In August 1987, Ford said, the board ruled the Rossville nursing home was a "single location" and ordered the election there, without involving workers at the other two nursing homes.

By the time the NLRB ruled, Ford said, most of the 140 workers at Rossville had left. Under the circumstances, the union withdrew its petition.

"The Manor Healthcare case is an apt illustration of the maxim, 'Justice delayed is justice denied,' " Ford said. "Adoption of the proposed rule would significantly reduce — if not completely eliminate — the chance of similar travesties occurring in the future."

— Press Associates

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Workers renew commitment to safety, health

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Activists seeking to turn back the flood of GOP attacks on workplace safety and health are asking their supporters to renew their commitment to the promise of safe jobs.

The AFL-CIO has launched a pledge drive to coincide with the 8th annual Workers Memorial Day, April 28. Unlike fund-raising telethons, however, this drive seeks the signatures of members of Congress, employers, local elected officials, community leaders, workers and other proponents of workplace safety on a form stating their commitment to the following principles:

- All workers have a right to a safe job guaranteed by law.
- All employers have the responsibility to provide a workplace free of recognized hazards that can cause death or serious harm and to comply with legal safeguards to protect safety and health.
- The government has the obligation to set standards that protect workers from significant hazards, to carry out effective oversight and enforcement to ensure that hazards are corrected and to dedicate adequate resources to these endeavors.
- Workers have the right to raise safety and health concerns without fear of reprisal and the right to call for and receive a government inspection to investigate serious hazards.
- Workers have a right to know about the hazards they face on the job, the right to participate in safety and health at the worksite and the right to refuse work that puts them in danger.
- The government must take a leadership role in carrying out research on new hazards and methods to control them with the full support and involvement of employers, unions and safety and health professionals.

Lawmakers' involvement in the pledge drive is paramount, as this April 28 also marks the 25th anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, now threatened by pending legislation in Congress.

Since 1971, progress has been made to reduce workplace deaths, injuries and illnesses, but many workers remain in danger. For example, last year alone more than 55,000 workers died and 7 million more were injured because of workplace hazards. Job injuries cost the country more than $112 billion each year and cause immeasurable pain and suffering for workers and their families.

The pledge carries through the theme of this Workers Memorial Day of "Safe Jobs — Keep the promise alive." That theme resonates through other planned activities to mark the day, such as rallies, candlelight vigils, marches, petition campaigns, letter-writing campaigns, public meetings and moments of silence in memory of those workers making the ultimate sacrifice — their lives — on the job.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney is scheduled to participate in Workers Memorial Day events in Milwaukee and Madison, Wis., while Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson is slated to be in St. Louis.

A news conference and related events also are planned in Washington to mark the two anniversaries.

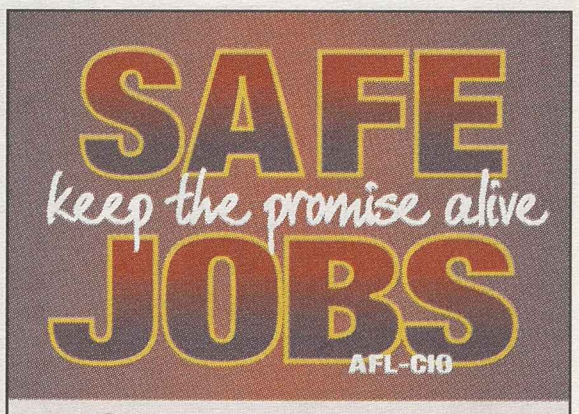
While America's working families were able to beat back the challenge to job safety posed by legislation introduced by Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.), numerous threats remain, especially with regard to funding federal job safety agencies.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration as of the end of March remained without permanent funding for fiscal 1996 — halfway through the funding year. A congressional conference committee put forth a budget of nearly $289 million, while the White House was seeking to bump that up to some $309 million.

Enforcement funds would take the heaviest hit in either case, decreased by approximately $26 million over the 1995 budget.

In addition, both houses of Congress included in their budget measures language to restrict the development of an ergonomic standard. Workers and their allies are taking steps to persuade conferees to drop the language completely; barring that, the Senate version is less restrictive and at least would allow some work.

Finally, the White House's budget for fiscal 1997 was announced March 25 — and while the overall budget request is higher than current funding at nearly $341 million, enforcement funds remain near the 1996 level.



On this Workers Memorial Day, the 25th anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, employers and members of Congress are being asked to sign a simple, essential pledge:

"I support the principles for safe jobs set forth above, and pledge to work to improve safety and health protection for American working men and women and to keep the promise of safe jobs alive."

'96 budget fight spills over into next fiscal year

By Mike Hall

Halfway through the fiscal year, Congress still is fighting over the 1996 budget because members of the "radical right in the House," are standing the way of an agreement, Sen. Minority Leader Thomas Daschle (D-S.D.) charged.

Meanwhile, with President Clinton's submission of his budget, the debate over 1997's spending is beginning.

The federal government has been operating under a series of 11 continuing resolutions since the fiscal year began in October. By attaching unacceptable partisan provisions to previous spending bills, congressional Republicans have forced two government shutdowns, affecting departments and agencies that have not yet been funded.

Efforts to combine the five remaining appropriations bills into one omnibus bill stalled last week when the House dragged its feet in restoring some education, training and environmental funds as the Senate had done. Clinton also is seeking additional funds for Head Start and other programs, and has expressed opposition to numerous riders on the omnibus bill.

Both chambers cut OSHA's overall funding — 10 percent in the House and 7 percent in the Senate — and its enforcement budget even more severely.

A conference on the omnibus bill began last week. If an agreement could not be reached, another temporary spending bill was expected to provide funds through the upcoming two-week congressional recess. It was unclear whether the Republicans would attempt to load the bill with provisions that would force another veto and lead to a third federal shutdown. The last continuing resolution expired March 29.

Meanwhile, the president's 1997 budget proposal shows his continued determination to fight GOP attempts to balance the federal budget on the backs of working families. His balanced-budget plan would cut corporate welfare and give the middle class a raise through tax credits.

A detailed outline of the GOP fiscal 1997 budget will be included in the non-binding budget resolution both houses must pass by April 15. Last year, however, the Republicans used the budget process to signal attacks on prevailing wages and job training, programs that would gain more support under Clinton's plan — including the addition of 200 inspectors for the Labor Department's wage and hour division. The president's budget also increases funds for several programs that protect workers' pensions.

Clinton's plan would cut middle-class taxes with a $500 tax credit for children, with the full credit available for families earning less than $60,000 annually. The GOP's proposed tax cut would benefit families making more than $200,000 a year and big business. Clinton's budget also calls for the elimination of various business tax loopholes known as "corporate welfare."

GOP smear campaign against unions just beginning

The Republican right has fired the first shot at labor in what is expected to be "the biggest smear campaign, the biggest disinformation campaign in the history of American politics," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the federation's special convention.

Reacting to the AFL-CIO's plans to mobilize workers against the radical agenda of the Republican leadership, the House Oversight Committee tried March 21 to set up sham hearings to attack the federation.

Democratic members angrily walked out, calling the effort a "vendetta" against unions.

The GOP's "transparent purpose in today's proceeding is to put the labor movement in their cross hairs for having the apparent audacity to publicly oppose the Republican agenda in this Congress," said Rep. Vic Fazio (D-Calif.), the ranking minority member.

"The radical right in this country wants to raise and spend tens of millions of dollars . . . to convince America our voice should be stilled," Sweeney said.

Fazio charged the committee's Republican leadership with trying to dupe Democratic members into supporting the hearings and labor leaders into testifying at what was set up to be a political ambush.

The committee had held two previous campaign finance hearings that "were a well-balanced effort to present topics of bipartisan concern," Fazio said.

He said he was given the impression that this hearing would continue in the same bipartisan vein when groups representing the political spectrum — including the American Medical Association, Planned Parenthood, the National Rifle Association, the Sierra Club, the National Right to Life Committee, the Christian Coalition, the AFL-CIO, the Teamsters and Common Cause — were invited to supply information about their independent expenditures and voter education efforts.

But as the hearing date neared, the committee refocused the hearing on union political activities only. The witnesses who agreed to appear to testify on union political activities were from the anti-union National Right-to-Work Committee or were well-known union-hating academics and consultants.

Fazio charged the committee with conducting "a one-sided inquiry into legitimate political activities of the working men and women who make up the American labor movement."

Sweeney told the convention to expect the attack to continue as "they try to convince the public that election laws permit corporations, right-wing zealots and their organizations to engage in politics and lobbying, but don't permit unions to do likewise."

On one hand, Fazio said, congressional Republicans attempted to intimidate workers for opposing the GOP agenda. But on the other, "those who support a capital gains tax cut and the repeal of environmental laws and worker protections spend hundreds of millions of dollars" influencing public opinion, and "they are seen to deserve not a seat at the witness table — but a seat at the majority's legislative table, where they meet with Republican leadership and write our laws."

— Mike Hall

Delegates see political problems, promise of '96

Working families this year face the greatest political challenge in putting the power of the people to work in the voting booth, AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal told delegates at a workshop after the special convention.

But history portends a great opportunity to beat back the radical forces guiding the "Contract on America," reversing the Republican congressional landslide of '94, as happened in 1946-1948, 1958-1960, 1964-1966 and 1980-1982, when similarly large shifts in seats to one political party the first year rebounded to the other party in the next election cycle, he said.

Rosenthal and Legislative Director Peggy Taylor focused on the tools and organizing that can make a difference at the polls — to elect those candidates who will be responsive to the needs of America's working families.

Other workshops covered mobilizing around legislative issues, the working women's vote, labor's message, grass-roots mobilization, religious political extremists and turning out the urban vote.

Since some 29 congressional seats were won in the last election by less than 5,000 votes, it is clear every vote counts, Rosenthal said. He outlined labor's campaign themes of "Building to Win, Building to Last" through charts, graphs, survey research and suggestions for laying the foundation of a strong grass-roots movement. The subsequent workshops explored those concepts in greater detail.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

A series of workshops after the special convention gave delegates a preview of the political year.

Labor's message

The AFL-CIO set out to prove that the medium is essential to the message as it used one convention workshop to explore ways to convey its 1996 political program.

Pollster Geoff Garin of Peter D. Hart Research Associates Inc. told unionists that 57 percent of union members consider being involved in national politics and issues "very important," but workers are not enamored with the political system as it exists today.

Garin presented guidelines for union political action. Among them were:

- Unions must downplay partisan rhetoric in favor of stressing their role as an independent voice for working people.
- Issues come first, candidates second. Electing people is not an end in itself, Garin said. The point of departure must be about ideas.
- In election campaigns, unions need to provide members with information, not voting instructions. "People are willing to see unions as credible sources of information," Garin said.
- Members want unions to represent their interests as workers — that is labor's niche — which is best done by advancing a populist economic agenda.
- Political action decisions, such as endorsements, should be an opportunity for encouraging participation and highlighting union responsiveness.
- Political action should be about involving and empowering the members themselves, not just about what the union as an institution should do for them.
- Unions must respect members' deep skepticism about politics and politicians, and be "watchdogs" who work to hold officials accountable and make the system more responsive.

Using legislative issues

Labor's unprecedented grass-roots drive is a major reason the GOP's attack on working families and its Contract with America have been held in check. But participants in a legislative/grass-roots update workshop were told that even more effort will be needed to hold the line against the GOP's renewed attacks this year.

The workshop recapped some of the legislative successes, such as the recent abandonment by House Republicans of a bill to gut OSHA, the holding back of some $270 billion in Medicare cuts and $10 billion in education cuts in the budget battle.

Linda Miller of the AFL-CIO's Legislative Department told the group that cooperation between the federation and affiliates both in Washington and in the field was a key factor in those victories. She also credited the assignment of full-time staff to targeted congressional districts and paid media as aiding the effort.

Keeping union members involved and attracting more to grass-roots action will be a major drive for the rest of the year, said Susan Washington, also of the federation's Legislative Department.

The AFL-CIO's new training for grass-roots mobilizing and political action will bring labor's message deeper into the workplace and help challenge more union members to become involved, she said.

One of the clear messages polls show is that union members want information and facts about the issues in a way that allows them to formulate their own conclusions, she said. While they expect their union to have their political interests at heart, they don't want to be told how to vote.

Throughout the spring and summer, she said, mobilizing around the legislative issues is one of the primary grass-roots goals. The Republicans have said they won't back off their attacks on unions through the so-called TEAM Act, right-to-work measures, reining in the National Labor Relations Board and in other areas. Budget fights will remain a battleground, as will Medicaid, welfare, affirmative action and regulatory reform.

Tending the grass roots

The November elections and labor's response to the radical conservative attack on working families "is a contest for the future," and successful grass-roots mobilization will be a major component of that fight.

Workshop moderators Heather Booth, a grass-roots specialist for the Democratic National Committee, and Paul Booth, director of organizing for AFSCME, outlined the common obstacles to mobilizing workers and allies around labor's issues, and offered ways to overcome those hurdles and move people to action.

Workshop participants listed several obstacles that they have encountered — such as apathy, fear, lack of time, inability to define issues — in getting people involved in political and union grass-roots action.

Many people fear looking foolish when it comes to political action, such as meeting with lawmakers or representing labor in public at rallies, demonstrations or even on radio call-in shows.

That, Heather Booth said, is because they think that they don't know enough about the issues. She suggested role-playing and rehearsals, providing them with evidence and documentation and the use of personal stories to illustrate the issues.

Working women count

Political campaigns must speak to working women in language that addresses their concerns, pollster Jennifer A. Sosin told an all-female audience during the AFL-CIO's special convention workshop break-outs.

Since 1974, women have registered to vote in greater numbers than men, and currently comprise 53 percent of the electorate. While they provided the margin of victory to the Clinton-Gore ticket in the 1992 election, women turned out in lesser numbers in 1994, creating a pivotal shift in election results in several key congressional districts.

Women are among the angriest of the electorate, face economic anxiety and feel alienated from the political process, said Karen Nussbaum, director of the federation's Working Women's Department.

There has been a tendency for political campaigns to misidentify key issues that affect women. "Women are concerned about economic security, and it is critical to use 'kitchen table language' that takes the abstract, such as job training, and turns it into a personal issue of 'I know what it's like,' " said Sosin.

Both Sosin and Nussbaum agreed that language that rings true with working women voters likely will bring in the blue-collar male votes as well.

Urban efforts

Union issues, particularly in urban areas, are community issues that must be solved through an inclusive political effort.

"We must address core issues such as jobs, reindustrialization and family wages to get out the urban vote," Stewart Acuff, president of the Atlanta AFL-CIO, told workshop attendees.

"All politics are local," said Ann Kelly, Midwest political director, "and we have to show people that they have a stake in the matter. We have to build relationships and talk about what they care about.

"It's not about GATT," she said. "It's about increasing the minimum wage. We have natural allies, and when we educate them and reach out to them, they respond," she said.

Unions and their issue supporters also must start holding politicians accountable for what they say and do — or don't do — once they are elected.

"Who says every seat has to be endorsed?" asked Kelly. "And when they are elected, we have to figure out how to get in their faces and demand to know why they voted like they did."

Workshop attendees also suggested reaching out to young adults who are disconnected from the political process, putting more emphasis on local races, building labor/neighborhood precincts and working closely with the state federations and central labor councils.

Fighting the extremists

Religious political extremists pose a significant threat to those candidates who would best represent America's working families, and should not be discounted when campaigning.

In a workshop conducted after the federation's special convention, Earl Bender of Avenel Associates outlined the pervasiveness of such extremists.

He noted the Christian Coalition already claims control of 18 state legislatures. In addition, the American Family Association has some 20 chapters nationwide, and the Citizens for Excellence in Education and its companion National Association of Christian Educators has some 35 state chapters. The Focus on the Family and its Family Research Council enjoy a radio audience of 40 million for daily 2-minute radio commentaries, and function as a testing ground for Republican presidential candidates.

Religious extremists lose their appeal to potential voters, Bender said, when identified as people who "go too far," "extremists who don't represent us" and those who "impose their views on others."

Candidates favored by working families can and should be certain voters know they are the mainstream choice, with mainstream values shared by the voters. In addition, such candidates should realize part of the campaign will be fought on religious terrain, but that religion itself should not be disparaged.

Contributing to this story were Muriel H. Cooper, Mike Hall, David Kameras and Colleen M. O'Neill.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

The plight of workers was addressed in personal terms by AFSCME member Ann Cohen, at microphone, and (from left) Kathleen Mazzi of the Communications Workers and Angie Rogers of UNITE. Cohen works for the city of Philadelphia, Mazzi for AT&T and Rogers for Fieldcrest Cannon.

Delegates fund massive political drive

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face of layoff uncertainty; Angie Rogers, a UNITE member who told about the importance of job safety laws at her job at Fieldcrest Cannon in Phoenix City, Ala.; and Ann Cohen, an AFSCME member and employee of the city of Philadelphia, who described the personal trauma of caring for elderly parents with Medicare and Medicaid threatened by cuts.

In the federation's first special convention since the 1955 merger convention of the AFL and the CIO, delegates approved a special one-year assessment on national unions of 15 cents per member per month to help fund the mobilization program. The federation and its largest unions will kick in another $10 million to reach the $35 million goal.

Much of the funding will go toward a national advertising campaign focusing on issues important to working families, with millions also devoted to the education, training and mobilization of union members. The program will reach beyond the 1996 election, building a grass-roots network in every U.S. congressional district.

Pointing to the AFL-CIO media campaign that put the Republican leadership on the defensive last year, Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson introduced the resolution by noting that "we spent $7 million educating our members and the general public, and we stopped the 'Contract With America' dead in its tracks. Now we need to spend about seven times that much to bury it six feet under."

President Ron Carey of the federation's largest union, the Teamsters, said, "We're here to take on one of the most important challenges in the history of the labor movement — to reach out to each and every union member and get them involved in our fight to reclaim America."

"This is a fight the labor movement cannot afford to lose," said AFGE President John N. Sturdivant. "With this program, we'll be in their faces and on their cases."

The federation's efforts were praised by Vice President Gore, who thankfully accepted labor's endorsement of the Clinton-Gore ticket and credited the labor movement with past and future successes by President Clinton.

"You helped him stop those characters in Congress who may try to wither Medicare and shut down the American government," he said. "Yes, you're coming on strong, bringing working men and women together in the fight for jobs and for justice. And you are going to grow even stronger now that you have renewed your commitment to organizing and boosted your investment in grass-roots political action."

Campaign focus is economic injustice

Continued from Page 1

beginning this month in Baltimore, to focus on the nation's growing wage gap. The inadequate minimum wage, which has been stuck at $4.25 for five years as of April 1, is part of the problem, but it runs much deeper, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told delegates to a special convention March 25.

American workers are in a world "where the richest 20 percent of the citizens control 85 percent of the wealth, and the rest of the people fight like dogs over what is left," Sweeney said. "A world where corporate profits, executive compensation and stock prices continue to soar and incomes for working families continue to go down.

"A world where downsizing and restructuring continue creating unemployment for thousands of workers and mounting job insecurity for those still on the job," he said.

As part of its "America Needs a Raise" campaign, the AFL-CIO is working with coalitions in several states to promote "living wages," which would amount to far more than the minimum wage with the modest increase being proposed.

Minnesota, despite having one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation, saw its senate pass a bill last month requiring businesses with more than 20 employees and that receive at least $25,000 in state or local job-creating assistance to pay their workers at least $7.28 an hour in wages and benefits. Unfortunately, Republican Gov. Arne Carlson is expected to veto the measure.

Last year, Baltimore enacted a "living wage" ordinance to help contract workers make ends meet. Helena Jobes, who for years had worked at $4.25 an hour, joined an organizing campaign sponsored by AFSCME and the Industrial Areas Foundation to push for the statute. Now her wage is $6.10, and soon will rise to $7.70.

At a Capitol Hill news conference, Jobes urged senators to "understand the difference between a minimum wage and a 'living wage.' Send a message to those working men and women all over this country that are sweeping up and mopping up, making our food and making our beds, that in this country we still value their hard work."

AFL-CIO economist Anne Draper estimates that an hourly wage of $7.61 would be needed by a family of four just to reach the poverty line.

The growing gap in America's standard of living has prompted numerous proposals to link tax benefits to corporate good deeds.

"We can use the tax code to reward corporations that are doing the right thing," House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.) told the Economic Strategy Institute, echoing a concept that has been voiced by Kennedy and Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich.

Workers prefer Clinton-Gore, surveys show

Continued from Page 1

November 1995. Only 22 percent of respondents backed Dole.

Among those surveyed, 51 percent said they planned to vote for Democratic candidates for Congress, with only 22 percent planning to vote Republican. This is an increase of 14 percent for the Democrats since April 1995, and a 2 percent drop for the Republicans.

Polls by individual unions reflect the same changes. Forty percent of Communications Workers voted Republican in 1994, union President Morton Bahr said. But now polls show two-thirds back Clinton and even more support a Democratic-controlled Congress.

An examination of the record shows why it's easy to see the "starkly different visions" of the country between the two parties, Trumka said. The Republican Congress, led by Dole and House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), has pushed an agenda that would destroy the working family, while Clinton has stood up for workers, he said.

Trumka repeated a long list of issues where the line was clearly drawn, with Clinton fighting for workers and the Congress trying to take away gains: health care, workplace safety, minimum wage, Davis-Bacon, Service Contract Act, striker replacement, education, freedom to form a union and collective bargaining. "This endorsement is justified and called for by the records," Trumka said.

Gore, addressing the convention after the endorsement, promised he and Clinton would "speak up loudly, boldly and clearly" for working families during the 1996 campaign, saying the difference between the policies of the Clinton administration and the Gingrich-Dole Congress is glaring. "If it's good for working families, they've got it in their cross hairs," he said.

The Clinton administration will "continue fighting for and beside ordinary working Americans," Gore said, "who have barely begun in a new economy, one that sparkles with promise but often crackles with unpredictability."

Gore praised unions for raising workers' wages, benefits and standards, saying, "You have picked the perfect moment to launch your comeback in the United States of America. You are on the move and we are on the move with you."

During debate on the endorsement resolution, speaker after speaker made it clear that working people have had enough and will make a change in 1996. "The labor movement needs a strong, decent, caring individual as president," Steelworkers President George Becker said. Clinton's record in using the veto to fight those who would end the labor movement shows he deserves labor's backing, he said.

"Who do you think will hear the whimper of a hungry child?," asked Pat Lehman, a Machinist from Kansas, "gloom-and-doom Dole or Bill Clinton? Clinton isn't perfect, but he stays with us," she said.

The only hope of stopping the "Robin Hood in reverse" policies of the Republicans, who take from the poor to give to the rich, is to make union members aware of the issues, said Food and Commercial Workers President Douglas H. Dority.

UNITE Vice President Evelyn Dubrow condemned those members of Congress who once supported labor, but now are "scared stiff" because they think the labor movement is dead. Republicans have attacked labor's political activities because they "know we're the only group that can re-elect Bill Clinton and take back the Congress," she said.

The litmus test of the quality of life in a democratic society, AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy said, is the strength of the labor movement. Quoting Charles Dickens, he said the United States is living in the "best of times and the worst of times," depending on whether you are rich or a worker.

"It is immoral that only the rich can educate their young, and it is indecent that those who work a lifetime can't live out their sunset years in peace," he said.

The only expressed opposition to the resolution came from the Longshoremen and Warehousemen, who called for more negotiations with Clinton to assure that he would support labor's agenda. Several other unions abstained, citing internal endorsement processes that were not completed.

Kmart protests spotlight bias in chain's pay

Atlanta rally kicks off UNITE nationwide drive

By Muriel H. Cooper

Forty-one union, civil rights and religious leaders were arrested as nearly 1,200 workers chanted "shut them down" at an Atlanta shopping center protest against discriminatory practices at Kmart Corp.

The March 23 demonstration by UNITE, the Atlanta Labor Council, national and Atlanta-area civil rights and religious leaders kicked off a day of national demonstrations.

The protests mark an expansion of what began in December as a local holiday season boycott by African-American ministers and Kmart workers in Greensboro, N.C., over the store's discriminatory pay practices for minority employees in the "hardline" distribution center.

The predominantly white work forces at Kmart's other hardline centers earn hourly wages averaging more than $4 higher than those of the Greensboro workers.

More than 130 protesters have been arrested in Greensboro in support of the workers.

"We are sending Kmart a resounding message," said Bruce Raynor, executive vice president and southern regional director for the union. "Labor will hit the streets, and stay in the streets, until Kmart ends this discrimination and gives the Greensboro workers equal pay for equal work."

Raynor was arrested along with two AFL-CIO vice presidents, Clayola Brown, UNITE's director of civil rights, and William Lucy, AFSCME's secretary-treasurer; Stewart Acuff, Atlanta AFL-CIO president; the Rev. James Orange of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department; Norman Hill, president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute; Rev. Benjamin Mitchell, National Baptist Convention USA; and Richard Womack, director of the AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department.



Bill Clark/Impact Visuals

Unionists march against Kmart in Atlanta, where several labor leaders were arrested.

"We virtually shut Kmart down two Saturdays before Easter," said Acuff about the demonstrators, who could not get past the store's foyer because the entrance doors were locked.

"These workers have been in contract negotiations since 1993," he said. "They are making less than workers who are doing the same work. This is what 'America needs a raise' is all about."

In Houston, about 150 labor and community activists picketed a Kmart near the Astrodome in a rally coordinated by the Harris County AFL-CIO. Protests also were held in Chicago, Cleveland, Memphis, Tenn., and Norfolk, Va.

UFW organizing drive mushrooms

Some 150 workers were fired and 30 arrested following a lunch-hour demonstration to demand that one of Florida's largest mushroom producers recognize the Farm Workers.

The management of Quincy Farms called in sheriff's deputies to clear the grounds March 14 after the workers exercised their right to seek a contract that would end poor pay and working conditions and abusive treatment.

"All they want is decent treatment by management, . . . a decent wage and working conditions," said UFW Vice President Rebecca Flores-Harrington, one of those arrested.

The UFW has been working with employees to organize the mushroom farm since last June, gaining signatures from 76 percent of the workers who said they wanted a union. The AFL-CIO issued an urgent request for assistance for the workers. Hundreds of union leaders and members flooded the company's parent, Sylvan, Inc., with phone calls and letters.

The UFW is urging union members to continue contacting Sylvan CEO Dennis Zenson at 412/295-3910 or via FAX at 412/295-4111.

State labor leaders and legislators expressed their support for the workers in a March 18 rally at the state Capitol. "Deplorable conditions exist at Quincy Farms," Florida AFL-CIO President Marilyn Lenard told the crowd. "We will not tolerate this kind of action by an employer. When one of us is injured, all of us are injured."

"We as working people will not tolerate people being arrested for exercising their rights in the democratic process to talk to other workers during their lunchtime," said Rep. Anthony Hill (D), who also is secretary-treasurer of the state AFL-CIO.

"A lot of our employers are doing the right thing, but all of them ought to do it. I join with you in praying for jobs with justice," Rep. Bob Casey (R) said.

Community support for the workers also has intensified. Religious groups and college students have sent letters to supermarket managers asking them to urge the company's owner to bargain with the UFW.

TCU strike at rail tie plant spreads

A strike by Transportation Communications Union members at a Koppers Industries railroad tie treatment facility in Somerville, Texas, spread to a plant in Galesburg, Ill., as worker solidarity ruled the rails.

The 40 TCU members in Galesburg were supporting 70 Somerville unionists who struck March 8 after seven months of negotiations failed to achieve any progress toward reaching a contract.

"This strike was expanded because TCU members in Galesburg are being required to perform 'struck work,' " said union President Bob Scardelletti. Management had been diverting work to Illinois to avoid the job action.

United Transportation Union President Charles Little has offered UTU's support and cooperation to the Koppers strikers "on the front lines in the struggle to obtain decent wages, benefits and working conditions."

The Santa Fe Railway spun off the Somerville facility a year ago, and TCU won a representation election last June. Since taking over, Koppers has slashed wages and benefits of the former Santa Fe workers and has stonewalled negotiations for a contract.

"The union has endlessly been trying to get them to the table, but they said they weren't going to budge, they weren't going to talk to us anymore," said TCU Santa Fe System Board Chairman Steve Watson. Then the Galesburg picket line went up, and management started talking again.

After cutting wages between $4 and $5 an hour, Koppers has offered back 30 cents an hour, which the union has resolutely rejected. "Our demands don't come even near half" of what was cut, Watson said. "We're not greedy. We just want a little bit back. But for every seven steps we've taken toward the middle, they've taken one."

"What has happened to our members in Somerville, Texas, can happen to anyone working in today's rail industry," Scardelletti said.

BARGAINING

UFCW, three chains agree

The Food and Commercial Workers ratified two contracts with major grocery chains and reached a tentative agreement with another in talks that covered some 40,000 workers.

Six months before their contracts were due to expire, employees at metropolitan Washington's two largest supermarket chains approved parallel 42-month contracts that raise wages and increase pension benefits.

The contracts between UFCW Local 400 and Giant Food and Safeway Stores cover some 20,000 employees. The deals establish a lower wage for new hires and varying lump-sum payment and wage increase schedules for food clerks, nonfood clerks and meatcutters.

Some 2,000 Safeway workers represented by UFCW Local 27 in Baltimore also approved the same deal, but the 7,000 Giant employees represented by Local 27 rejected the pact. They will continue working under the current contract, which expires Sept. 21.

The formula for calculating pension benefits also will be increased for all employees.

In the Chicago area, after more than five months of working without a contract, UFCW Local 881 reached a tentative three-year agreement March 14 with Jewel stores covering 20,000 grocery clerks. The previous contract expired Sept. 30, 1995. Workers are to vote on the agreement April 22.

Talks were held up over wages and health care coverage, said Wally Evans, Local 881's chief negotiator. The proposed package contains a combination of wage increases and lump-sum payments, he said.

New Yale strike begins

Yale University food service and custodial workers kept their promise and walked out March 27, shutting down 22 dining halls and leaving trash uncollected.

The strike began after talks between Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 35 and the university broke down over Yale's decision to subcontract some services. The workers, along with members of HERE Local 34, have been without a contract since Feb 7. No more talks have been scheduled.

Local 34, which represents clerical workers, staged a 30-day strike that ended March 6. They were supported by the 1,100 workers in Local 35, who remained on the job and shared their wages with the striking employees.

Both locals have been in negotiations since Nov. 2.

SEIU gains hospital pact

Service Employees Local 113 approved a new three-year master agreement with Minnesota Hospital & Health Care Partnership that raises wages by 8 percent over the term of the contract.

The agreement was a product of interest-based bargaining and covers about 5,000 maintenance workers at 10 Minneapolis-St. Paul hospitals.

Under the contract, workers will receive retroactive wage increases of 3 percent, followed by raises of 3 percent and 2 percent in 1997 and 1998, respectively. Under the previous contract, which expired Feb. 29, the average pay rate was $10 an hour.

The company's pension plan contribution was increased from 28 cents per hour per employee to 30 cents, and additional vacation days were added for employees with 15 or more years of seniority.

NABET/CWA, NBC agree

The Broadcast Employees reached a tentative agreement with NBC on the last three contracts that comprise the five-year master agreement.

Members of the engineering, Los Angeles newswriters, Los Angeles air conditioning, plant maintenance, and building services units will vote on the new deal April 18. The master contract covers about 2,200 employees in 11 separate units across the country.

Under the agreement, employees would receive retroactive pay increases of 3.5 percent and new increases of 3 percent in 1997, 3.5 percent in 1998 and 3 percent in 1999.

After eight of the 11 units ratified a contract, NBC unilaterally imposed terms of the agreement on the remaining three units. That prompted the union to file unfair labor practice charges against the company with the National Labor Relations Board. Employees in the units that ratified earlier will receive the same increases, but with a different effective date, the union said.

Courts turn a blind eye to ergonomic injuries

By Colleen M. O'Neill

While workers are suffering from strains, sprains and pains brought on by workplace ergonomic hazards, lawmakers and the courts blind themselves to the injuries.

In Virginia, three workers suffering from cumulative trauma injuries — carpal tunnel syndrome and tenosynovitis — as a result of on-the-job strain have been denied workers' compensation benefits by the state Supreme Court.

In a unanimous opinion delivered March 1, the court denied benefits even for those workers with medical certification of a work-related disease. The court said classification of an impairment as an occupational disease was a legal, not medical, question.

In fact, the justices ruled that "just because a doctor opines that a particular impairment is a disease does not necessarily make it so."

A Richmond copy editor and poultry plant workers in the Shenandoah Mountain region of the state had their workers' comp benefits upheld by the state court of appeals in a previous verdict.

The Supreme Court's decision means workers' only choice is to file suit, said state AFL-CIO President Daniel LeBlanc.

"The only remedy is to sue the employer for willful negligence for failing to maintain a safe workplace," he said.

Regulatory relief from the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration is years away and slipping further behind in the face of relentless Republican attacks on funding and information gathering.

House GOP members have pressed continually to have language included in appropriations measures that would forbid OSHA from even soliciting statistical information from employers, much less to develop a draft proposal on ergonomic hazards.

The Senate appropriations language has been less drastic, but still places conditions on the development of such a standard.

Recent statistics and studies show the overwhelming need for workplace solutions to curb the ailments related to repetitive motion jobs. The most recent national data gathered by the U.S. Department of Labor shows a nearly 800 percent increase in the past decade of cumulative trauma disorders, making it the fastest-growing category of occupational injury or illness.

Current estimates of all musculoskeletal disorders range from 800,000 to 2.7 million cases annually, affecting meatpacking and poultry workers, computer programmers, auto workers, supermarket employees and many others. Affected workers suffer pain, restricted life activities, lost work time and often permanent disability.

A recent study by the Communications Workers shows that repetitive stress injuries continue to develop. Eighty-one percent of some 8,000 telephone operators responding to the 1995 survey reported hand or wrist pain, compared with 73 percent in 1992 and 63 percent in 1989, the union said.

Similarly, 66 percent of the operators reported such symptoms as numbness or tingling of fingers in the latest survey, compared with 59 percent in 1992 and half of the respondents in 1989, CWA said. Twelve percent of the operators reported having medically diagnosed carpal tunnel syndrome in 1995, compared with 9 percent in 1992 and 6 percent in 1989.

The rising numbers come in spite of improved equipment and work stations provided to the operators.

Service representatives, clerical video display terminal operators and others with similar jobs also have reported increased ergonomically related injuries and illnesses, the union said.

UNITE draws line on sweatshops, puts out message

Eighty-five years ago last month, 146 young women died in a fire at a New York sweatshop operated by the Triangle Shirtwaist Co.

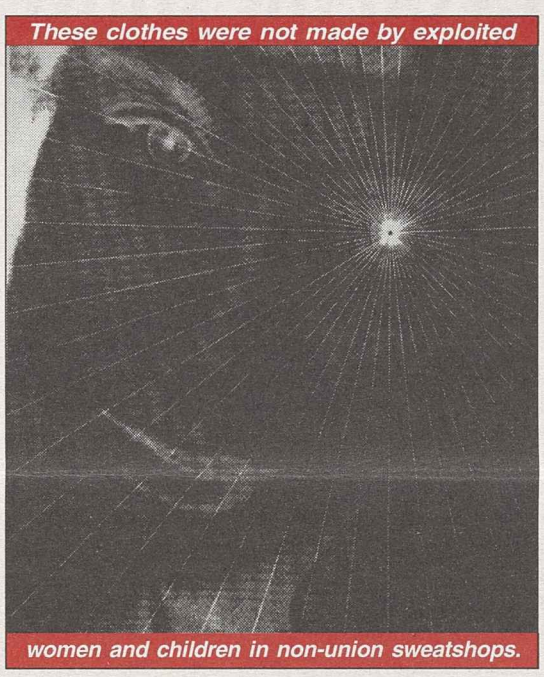
The "Triangle Fire" became a focal point for national attention and government action to prohibit such workplace atrocities as sweatshops.

With news accounts even today swirling about of immigrants locked behind closed doors and forced to work intolerable hours in inhuman conditions, UNITE has focused attention on the renewed fight against sweatshops with the release of art that will be mass produced for T-shirts and shopping bags.

The art, which mixes words and images, includes a reproduction of a woman's head in black and grey, with the message, "These clothes were not made by exploited women and children in non-union sweatshops."

The shopping bags, which will be distributed by union and anti-sweatshop coalition members, were unveiled March 24 at UNITE's commemoration of the victims of the New York City fire. After the ceremony, participants marched down Broadway distributing the bags and other consumer educational materials.

Speakers at the ceremony included UNITE Executive Vice President Edgar Romney, garment workers Nancy Pena and Ying Yi Deng and New York City Central Labor Council President Brian McLaughlin.



In remarks the following day, Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich decried the rise in sweatshops and announced a national effort to raise public awareness and educate consumers about their existence.

That campaign will include public service announcements, print ads and a site on the World Wide Web, Reich said.

High court lets workers sue on pension fraud

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that individual workers can sue benefit managers who lie to them about the financial health of their companies and the state of their benefits.

The court, in Varity Corp. vs. Howe, upheld a lower court order that the company restore pension benefit rights for 5,500 employees and retirees.

The case began in 1988 when Varity decided to dump money-losing divisions in its Massey-Ferguson subsidiary into a new company, Massey Combines, based in Des Moines, Iowa. That scheme was no more than a "a sucker punch on loyal employees who had given a lifetime of service to a company," an Iowa federal judge ruled. A jury awarded the employees $46 million in damages, but a federal court lowered the amount to $8.3 million.

To convince workers to move to Massey Combines, Varity executives promised workers they would keep their pensions, benefits and seniority, even though they knew the new company was bankrupt.

Two years later, the farm equipment manufacturer went into receivership and benefits stopped for Massey Combines workers and Massey-Ferguson retirees who had been transferred to the new company without their knowledge. The workers sued and lower courts ruled in their favor.

Writing for the high court, Justice Stephen Breyer rejected Varity's argument that it acted as a company, not a fiduciary, and was not bound by federal pension laws.

He also dismissed arguments that suits only could be filed on behalf of the benefit plan, not individuals. "It is hard to imagine," he wrote, that Congress would "immunize breaches of fiduciary obligation that harm individuals by denying injured beneficiaries a remedy."

The ruling came on a 6-3 vote with Breyer, Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justices John Paul Stevens, Anthony Kennedy, David Souter and Ruth Bader Ginsburg in the majority. Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas dissented.

Workers find relief with tax credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit brochure helped Office and Professional Employee member Torree Wade save money twice in the same day.

The credit, available to low-to-moderate wage earners, reduces workers' tax burdens and supplements their income. In an effort to save additional costs, the Volunteer Income Tax Program helps families file their tax returns for free.

The AFL-CIO is urging all qualified workers to take advantage of the earned income credit before they file their federal tax return.

"Low-wage workers can put some extra money in their pockets if they use the credit," said Green Lewis, director of the AFL-CIO Department of Community Services. "The income levels for the credit have been raised, and the size of the credit, especially for workers with more than one child in the home, has been increased."

Wade said she has used the EITC for the past couple of years. "It's a really good program and workers should take advantage of it. Most of my refund this year was based on the EITC."

In previous years, Wade, who works as a receptionist for the Metropolitan Washington AFL-CIO, filed her taxes electronically in an effort to get a quick return. "I saw I was being charged almost $200 dollars for the quick turnaround and that was cutting into my refund money," she said.

"When I saw the materials at work and saw they had a number to call for free help, I called."

Workers who may be eligible for the credit include those whose income was lowered because of periods of unemployment or part-time work; workers whose employment is seasonal; workers who were on strike all or part of the year; and workers whose take-home pay isn't enough to garner a tax bill.

Workers who are raising one child in their home with a family income of less than $24,396 can get up to $2,094. Workers who are raising more than one child with a family income less than $26,673 can get a maximum credit of $3,100.

Single or married workers between the ages of 25 and 64 who are not raising children and with an income of less than $9,230 also qualify and can file any federal return.

Workers can have their refunds deposited directly in their bank accounts or can get EITC benefits added to their regular paychecks.

For more information about the EITC and tax help, call the Internal Revenue Service at 800/829-1040.

— **Muriel H. Cooper**

NEWSMAKERS

Paul E. Almeida, president of the Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, will steer a new committee set up to bring more engineers and scientists into the labor movement. The outreach effort to the highly skilled and educated technical, white-collar employees will be conducted through the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees.

Jean Nolan will head AFSCME's Public Affairs Department, replacing **Robert Harman,** who retired earlier this year. Nolan was assistant secretary for public affairs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development since 1993.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Ohio AFL-CIO President William A. Burga poses a question during a meeting of state federation leaders after the special convention. Central labor body leaders also met with top AFL-CIO officials.

Grass-roots centers on the move

Regional representatives named to General Board

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

America's workers are the key to organized labor's efforts and, thus, state and local AFL-CIOs must carefully tend the grass roots.

That was the message AFL-CIO officers brought to more than 150 state and central labor council officers meeting the day before and the day after the federation's March 25 special convention.

"We will not be successful in our organizing or political campaigns if we do not have viable state and local central bodies," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney. "I hope the fact that there are so many of you here is an indication of the enthusiasm throughout the labor movement. It's because of the great work of the state and local federations that we've stopped the work of 'Newtie and the Blowhards.' "

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson reiterated Sweeney's commitment to a model of inclusion and a bottom-up labor movement.

"We're going to build the labor movement from the grass roots up — with the passion of the workers — not from the top down," Trumka said. "We want you to succeed, and the federation is going to do everything in our power to make sure you succeed."

Pointing to her recent 10-day trip across America, Chavez-Thompson said that "it was refreshing to hear from so many enthusiastic union leaders and workers."

Sweeney also announced the selection of four regional representatives by the state federation conferences to serve on the General Board and the formation of a 20-member State and Central Labor Council Advisory Committee that will make recommendations to the federation.

The regional representatives are Frank Montanaro (Rhode Island) for the Northeast; Daniel LeBlanc (Virginia) for the South; Daniel J. "Duke" McVey (Missouri) for the Midwest; and Claude "Blackie" Evans (Nevada) for the West.

An additional four members of the advisory committee will be elected during a national conference for local AFL-CIO officers in July. State and local federations also will have the opportunity to discuss federation plans and programs in regional meetings.

As the federation's goals shift to organizing and political action, so will the state and local federation's efforts, but with added staff and resources, said AFL-CIO Field Services Director Marilyn Sneiderman, Political Director Steve Rosenthal and Organizing Director Richard Bensinger, all of whom laid out ways to attain those goals.

The mission of the central labor councils is to "organize" and "promote social justice," said Sneiderman, suggesting that their mission has not changed but has become more important.

"The CLCs and state federations must be building blocks of a revitalized movement," she said. "But the task is difficult to face when unions are often unaffiliated and inactive.

"The AFL-CIO and international unions will work together to get locals to affiliate. In fact, we must make unions feel it's foolish not to affiliate," Sneiderman added.

Florida AFL-CIO President Marilyn Lenard reiterated the importance of affiliation. "We don't have access to members, we have access to unions, so it's important for the unions to affiliate to supply membership participation."

And as unions affiliate, the 604 CLCs and 51 state (and territorial) federations will have greater success in organizing workers, Bensinger said, noting that "the past is our best teacher."

"There must be a shift of resources from servicing union members to organizing," he said. "We have serviced members for the last 30 years and witnessed a decline for the last 30 years. We focused on defending our base instead of expanding our base."

Success in the organizing drives will require a higher ratio of organizing staff to service staff, a shift in resources and money, great organizing directors, industry-based plans and the use of the membership base for bargaining strategies and volunteer organizing, Bensinger said.

As more workers become organized, the power base expands. As the power base expands, the labor movement regains its political clout, Rosenthal said, and simultaneously, state and local AFL-CIOs must be ready to "build to win and build to last."

The political campaign is about having a lasting organization that also will require a better use of resources on the political front, he added. "There will be strategic deployment of affiliate staff, mobilization around issues, skills/economic message training — 10,000 activists, folks doing house visits, going to work sites and getting a pledge from workers," he said.

To pull it off, it will take a serious examination of how campaigns are organized at the state and local level, Rosenthal declared. "I have already spoken to a union member in Indiana who ran twice for elected office and only received support from his local union. This can't continue to happen."

The state federations and the central labor councils also were urged to focus more attention on coalition-building. Sweeney pointed to the 1950s, when labor's power was at its greatest, as proof that such linkages only make labor stronger. With the current political climate, he said, "we need all the coalitions we can get. We have to reach out and build bridges — and we may block them once in a while — to take labor's message to the community."

The officers also participated in a dialogue with federation officers and the department heads. Speaker after speaker addressed the need for more resources, affiliation of local unions, improved communication and coordination of information from the federation, coordinated campaigns and jurisdictional disputes.

In Illinois, the cost of affiliation is about the same as the cost of a pack of cigarettes for each member, Illinois AFL-CIO President Donald A. Johnson explained, but the state federation receives per capita on less than 500,000 of the state's 800,000 union members.

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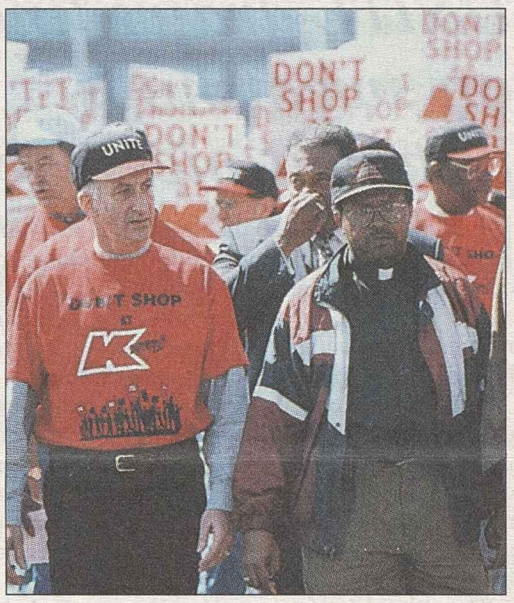
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1 *Minimum wage snub clarifies fight*



UNITE Executive Vice President Bruce Raynor and the Rev. Tim McDonald lead Atlanta march against Kmart discrimination. **See story, Page 6.**

UNION YES

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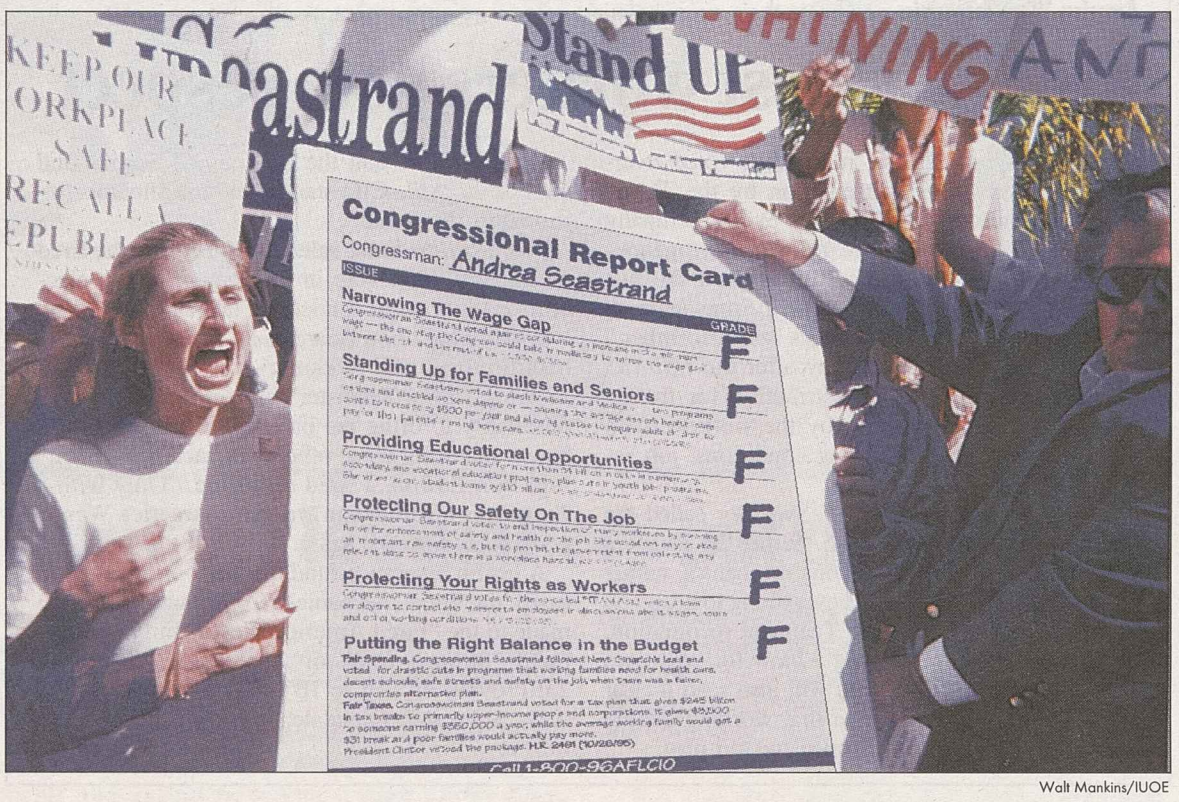
AMERICA NEEDS A RAISE
AFL-CIO

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 8

APRIL 22, 1996

Nationwide campaign focuses on need for living wage.
See story, Page 4.



Walt Mankins/IUOE

At a union rally in Santa Barbara, Calif., Rep. Andrea Seastrand (R) got flunking grades.

Lawmakers don't make grade

Extremists feel sting, ready smear campaign

By Mike Hall

The AFL-CIO put anti-worker lawmakers in the hot seat during the Easter break, issuing report cards to 33 House members in the continuing campaign to expose the attack on working families by the 104th Congress.

Most of those members flunked the working family test because of their votes on Medicare, Medicaid, education, workplace health and safety, minimum wage and tax cuts for big business and the wealthy — although there were a sprinkling of Bs, Cs and Ds.

Radio and television ads reinforced the minimum wage message as demonstrations, rallies and other activities highlighted the representatives' anti-working family stands.

The heat from the AFL-CIO's Labor '96 voter education and mobilization drive clearly is starting to singe the GOP leadership, led by House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and Majority Leader Richard K. Armey (R-Texas). They have geared up the party's propaganda machine in an effort to deflect labor's criticism.

Gingrich has outlined a campaign against union member mobilization, enlisting big-business allies like the Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Business and the National Right-to-Work Committee.

They have begun to spread disinformation with phony reports on unions and have sought to intimidate labor with congressional hearings on union activities **(See story, Page 3)**. The GOP has filed Federal Election Commission complaints about the AFL-CIO's televisions ads and reportedly has prepared a media campaign aimed at unions.

During the recess, at least two Republican House members, Andrea Seastrand of California and James Walsh of New York, tried to pressure television stations into yanking AFL-CIO ads criticizing their votes on the minimum wage and other issues.

The ads were tailored for each district, noting that the lawmakers had voted to block a minimum wage increase and also to cut Medicare and college loans and give tax breaks to the rich.

Union-sponsored rallies in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo, Calif., were disrupted by Seastrand supporters. But they only succeeded in "making fools of

Continued on Page 3

Workers seek job safety oath this April 28

25th anniversary of OSHA finds new attack on law

By Colleen M. O'Neill

With a pledge and prayer, workers across the nation will mark the 8th annual Workers Memorial Day on April 28, the 25th anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

As the legislative assault against workers' safety and health continues in the Republican-led Congress, activists' efforts are all the more important this year.

President John J. Sweeney will march and rally with workers in Milwaukee and Madison, Wis., on April 27, while Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson will gather with nearly 1,000 trade unionists April 28 along the banks of the Mississippi River in Alton, Ill., and St. Louis.

In Washington, victims of workplace carnage and surviving family members of workers will gather to tell their stories and put a human face on the nearly 55,000 worker deaths and 7 million worker injuries that occur annually. In addition, the AFL-CIO is preparing two reports, one detailing the history of workplace safety and health, and the other looking at the state of the states on the issue.

Members of Congress, employers, local elected officials, community leaders, workers and other proponents of workplace safety will be asked to sign a pledge stating, "I support the principles for safe jobs . . . and pledge to work to improve safety and health protection for American working men and women and to keep the promise of safe jobs alive."

Those making the special public pledge include community leaders in Northampton, Mass. Other activities include a program on health and safety at the American Labor Museum at the Botto House National Landmark in New Jersey and a prayer service in Anchorage, Alaska.

An ongoing effort as part of an Eagle Scout project in Denver seeks to raise funds to erect a memorial to members of the armed forces and federal employees who died in the service of their country, such as Bureau of Land Management or Forest Service firefighters, diplomats and employees of federal agencies

Continued on Page 5

LIUNA organizes asbestos industry in model campaign

By Muriel H. Cooper

A local union's commitment to organizing immigrant workers in New York City has resulted in an industrywide contract covering almost three-fourths of those working with asbestos.

In gaining 1,500 new members, Laborers Local 78 emerged from the cloud of trusteeship imposed on LIUNA's Mason Tenders District Council by renewing its organizing efforts with an extraordinary outreach program. LIUNA's general board recently reorganized the Mason Tenders into two newly chartered locals — one representing the building workers and the other covering the asbestos and lead abatement workers.

"We had a new vision for the local that we had to focus on organizing and providing a more effective level of service," said David Keiffer, who directed the campaign.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney lauded Local 78's strategy as "having all the elements of good organizing that we are looking to promote." That strategy included the industrywide focus and the use of volunteer organizers, grass-roots coalitions and massive public demonstrations.

At a celebration ceremony April 11, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka said the LIUNA effort is a beacon for the labor movement. "For a long time to come, working people in every part of the United States are going to look at us, and they'll say, 'Local 78 did it the right way. They took on an industry and won. And we can learn from them,' " he said.

The campaign began in December when the mostly Polish and Latino work force became discouraged about deteriorating working conditions, low pay and poor benefits. They were cheered "by the new face of LIUNA that we showed them," said David Johnson, who helped organize the workers.

"New Americans built the labor movement in the 19th and 20th centuries, and new Americans will play a key role in revitalizing it in the 21st," said LIUNA President Arthur A. Coia. "This generation of workers, represented by these men and women in New York City, have a historic opportunity to bring back fairness, dignity and honesty in the workplace."

LIUNA knew they had to overcome several obstacles if they were to be successful. About 40 asbestos

Continued on Page 13

ORGANIZING

Researchers choose CWA

Some 3,700 professional researchers throughout the University of California higher education system will be represented by the University Professional and Technical Employees, Local 9119 of the Communications Workers.

The unit is made up of research professionals who design and conduct experiments at UC's nine campuses, workers at five medical centers, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and UC's office of the president in Oakland, museum scientists, employees at the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley and the UCLA Film and Television Archive, marine technicians at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography in San Diego and spectroscopists.

The researchers and scientists join UC's 4,000 technical staff members who chose UPTE representation in 1994.

Vote ends double-breasting

Workers at a Petersburg, Va., carhauling company have ended the practice of "double-breasting" with a 20-16 vote for Teamster representation.

QAT was specifically established as a nonunion subsidiary of the Miami-based Ryder Corp.

Double-breasting has been used in the trucking and hauling industry to stop workers who want to join a union to improve their wages and working conditions. Companies employing the strategy set up various subsidiaries not covered by union contracts and send work to those facilities.

IBT President Ron Carey said, "QAT workers have sent a signal to all carhaul companies. If they set up nonunion shells to hold down wages and benefits and to deny decent working conditions, then workers will organize themselves."

Overnite, they're Teamsters

Workers at the fifth largest service center of Overnite Transportation in Lexington, Ky., voted for Teamsters representation.

It was the 17th victory in the massive organizing drive, which has been marked by charges of unfair labor practices against the company since it began in the fall of 1994.

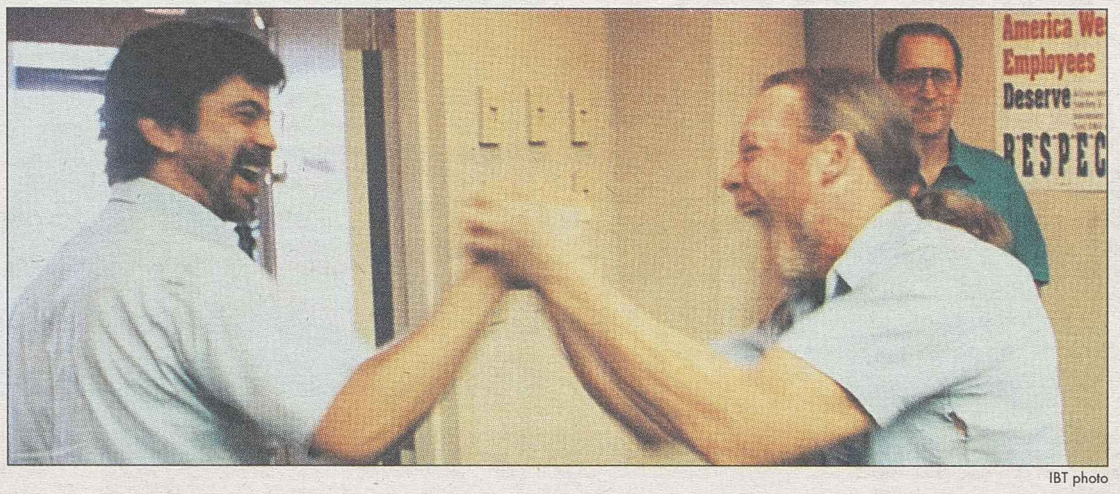
The IBT now represents 2,000 Overnite employees.

Wall-to-wall strategy

SEIU is pushing for wall-to-wall union representation at health care facilities in New York and Chicago.

Service and maintenance workers at St. Bernard's Hospital in Chicago voted 154-95 for SEIU, and more than 50 nurses voted 36-11 to join as well.

Meanwhile, workers at the George Junior rehabilitation facility in upstate New York voted 59-53 for SEIU. They too have filed on the remaining unit of about 40 teachers at the facility for troubled youth.



IBT photo

America West mechanics celebrate their overwhelming vote to gain representation by the Teamsters.

America West workers vote respect

America West Airlines mechanics voted overwhelmingly for representation by the Teamsters, scoring a stunning victory over a company that has exhibited corporate greed and arrogance.

"America West Airlines workers had the last word on an insensitive and greedy management that fired nearly 400 mechanics last December," said IBT President Ron Carey after the 587-135 vote. The firings were in retribution for the 80 percent union card sign-up by the workers, who cited concerns about working conditions, job security and wages.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney called the unionists to congratulate them. Earlier, he had sent letters of support to the Arizona mechanics, noting that "America West has tried everything to keep you from voting. By voting for Teamster recognition, you will not only be striking a blow for your own respect and job security, you will also send a clear signal to corporate America that working people will carry on the fight for justice and fair play.

"Please know that the millions of women and men of the AFL-CIO stand with you shoulder-to-shoulder," he wrote.

A federal mediator ruled in March that the fired mechanics could vote in the representation election. Ballots were mailed in late March by the National Mediation Board to all of the workers — both fired and still working.

"Only with a Teamster contract will we have a possibility to bring the outsourced work back in-house and bring those other jobs back with them," said Ron Edwon, a fired mechanic. "Only with a Teamsters contract can we make America West a good place to work again."

A health insurance fund has been established to assist the fired mechanics. Contributions can be made to the "Fired America West Family Medical Fund" through Bank of America, Account No. 235176969, or sent to IBT, 4444 West Northern Ave., Suite A-2, Glendale, Ariz., 85301.

— Muriel H. Cooper

SEIU gets Head Start

Head Start workers employed by East Baton Rouge Parish, La., voted 110-53 for representation with SEIU Local 100, which expects the victory to boost its efforts to organize Head Start workers in Houston.

In another SEIU victory, Local 200B won an election in Syracuse, N.Y., to represent more than 30 drivers employed by Bernie Bus Co. The vote was the third win in a series of four necessary elections needed to represent all 450 drivers at the company.

Navy trainers go IUE

Worker at Loral Training and Technical Service at Van Voorhis Naval Air Station, Nev., voted to join the Electronic Workers.

The 130 employees are highly specialized in the training of U.S. military combat pilots, and include electronic technicians who operate and maintain radar, computer analysts and equipment operators and engineers.

LIUNA gains with affiliation

With the affiliation of the National Federation of Independent Unions, the Laborers gained more than 10,000 new members, including some 2,100 from NFIU's Philadelphia-based United Independent Union.

Under the terms of the agreement, NFIU becomes a division of LIUNA, and NFIU's President Francis J. Chiappardi will remain as president of the division.

"This is a milestone for LIUNA, and for the working men and women who belong to the great unions of NFIU," said LIUNA President Arthur A. Coia. "LIUNA is a very diverse union, and NFIU members work in a diversity of jobs. In many ways, we are a perfect match."

Census counts on AFGE

Employees at the U.S. Census Bureau office in Jeffersonville, Ind., have voted unanimously for AFGE representation. The unit previously had been represented by the National Federation of Federal Employees.

"Federal employees need a voice on the job," said John N. Sturdivant, president of AFGE. "AFGE can provide that voice and the caliber of representation federal workers demand. And as part of the AFL-CIO, we have 80 other unions working with us."

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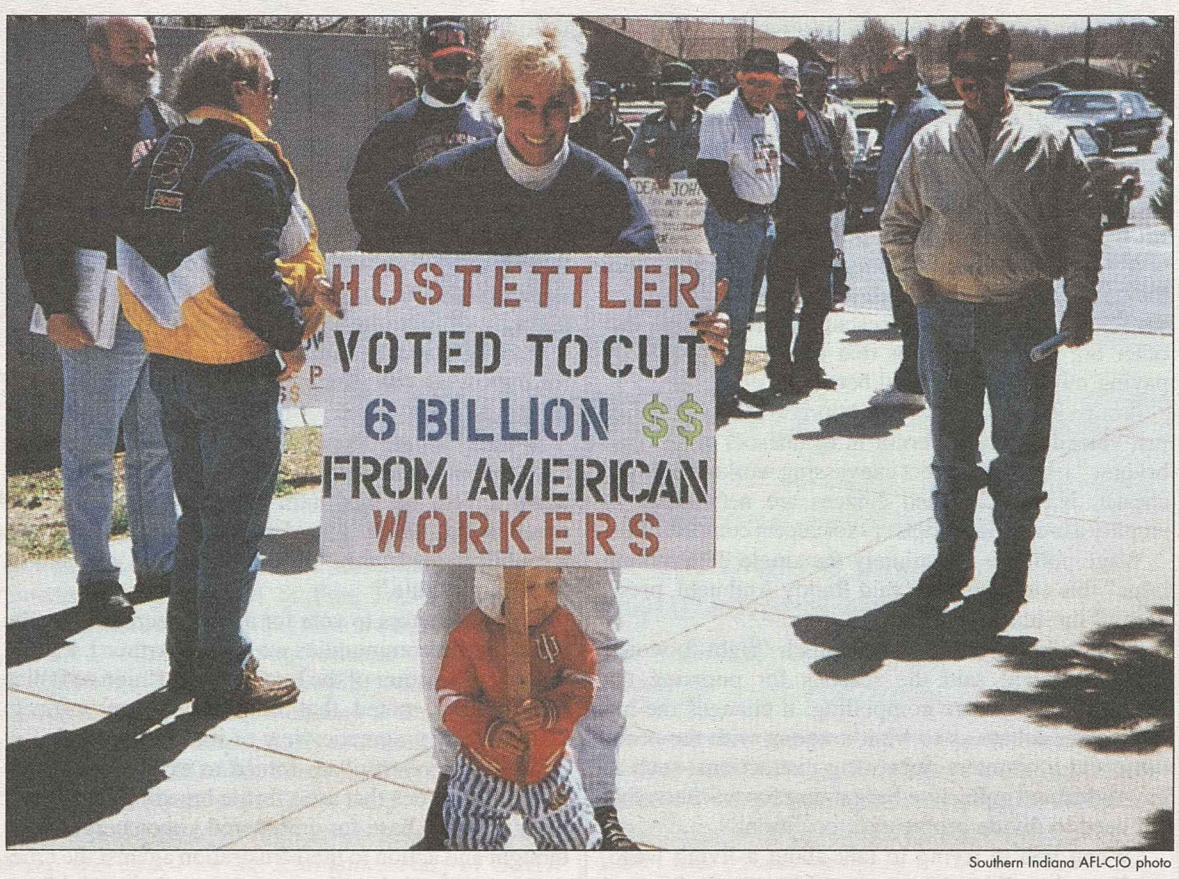
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Southern Indiana AFL-CIO photo

In Evansville, Ind., union members reminded Rep. John Hostettler (R) of his votes attacking working families.

Flunking lawmakers put on the spot

Continued from Page 1

themselves and they just energized our people even more," said AFL-CIO Field Representative Sal Lopez.

In an Evansville, Ind., town hall meeting, union members put the heat on GOP Rep. John N. Hostettler for his votes against the minimum wage, worker safety and the environment and in favor of allowing big business to raid their pensions funds.

He claimed raising the minimum wage would cost jobs, and said, "I'm not willing to terminate all those people who are making it on the minimum wage."

"They are not making it on the minimum wage," UAW member John Sharber responded from the audience.

In Omaha, Neb., Republican Rep. Jon Christensen also received straight Fs at a gathering of union members and senior citizens.

"For the past 15 months, Jon Christensen and Newt Gingrich have waged all-out war against working families, seniors, students and other vulnerable Americans by trying to cut Medicare, Medicaid, college loans, environmental and worker health and safety standards," to pay for tax cuts "directed to corporations and their wealthy friends," said Terry Moore, president of the Omaha AFL-CIO.

Some 50 union members rallied outside the Wichita campaign headquarters of Rep. Todd Tiahrt (R-Kan.). One sign read, "Rep. Tiahrt makes $65.38 an hour and votes against raising the minimum wage."

"It is time the congressman took a look at his voting record for the working people and stopped paying so much attention to the corporations who are donating to him every day," said Pat Lehman, president of the Wichita/Hutchinson AFL-CIO.

Yavette Tubbs, a single mother and senior at Chicago State University, is a former welfare recipient who "didn't have the necessary education to get a job that would pay me enough to take care of my son and me." She spoke at a rally of some 200 people outside a $250-a-plate fund-raiser for Rep. Michael Flanagan (R-Ill.) that featured Gingrich as the special guest.

She said her education was made possible by the same college scholarship programs Flanagan and Gingrich voted to slash. If those cuts had been made, she said, her loan and opportunity for an education might not have been possible.

Clinton bill seeks pension security

By Mike Hall

New pension proposals offered by President Clinton "would help stop the erosion of private pension coverage in America," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

The Retirement Savings Security Act, unveiled at the White House April 11, could aid as many as 51 million workers with provisions for pension portability, protection of pension funds for state and local public employees, increased penalties for corporate misuse of pension funds, new rules for Individual Retirement Accounts and decreased vesting time for workers in multiemployer plans common among construction workers.

Sweeney said the soon-to-be-introduced legislation comes at a time "when the decrease in private pensions — along with the erosion of health care coverage — is one of the biggest problems in the worsening economic situation of America's working families.

"Coupled with reckless proposals now being advanced to radically restructure and privatize Social Security, the erosion of pensions threatens to destroy retirement security for tens of millions of working Americans," he said.

Under the President's proposal, workers' 401(k) plans — in which workers contribute pre-tax dollars from their salary and employers match a certain percentage — could follow them from job to job. The money could be "rolled over" into the new plan and new contributions could start immediately rather than after the current one-year waiting period.

It would also allow new federal employees to begin contributing to plans as soon as they are hired. In addition, it would simplify 401(k) rules to encourage small employers to offer workers the retirement plans.

The proposal would increase penalties for corporate misuse of pension funds, such as raiding the funds. The penalties would be as high as $100,000.

Another provision would place the pensions of state and local government employees in trust. That would protect the workers' pensions if the government files for bankruptcy, as Orange County, Calif., did last year.

The eligibility rules for IRAs would be expanded from the current $35,000 annual income for single taxpayers to $70,000, and for married couples from $50,000 to $100,000.

In addition, taxpayers would be allowed to withdraw funds from the IRA without penalty for education and training, the purchase of a first home, major medical expenses and the expenses of long-term unemployment.

The plan would cut the vesting period for workers in multiemployer plans from 10 to five years. Construction workers who move from job to job but are still covered by a single pension plan would be helped by this change. The White House said as many as 1 million construction workers could be immediately vested if the plan is passed by Congress.

GOP puts on attack 'show' against unions

IAM, IBEW testify on 'Beck,' TEAM Act

By James B. Parks

Union representatives argued for common sense and worker rights as they countered attacks on worker organizations by the Republican congressional leadership.

A Senate committee marked up the misnamed TEAM Act and a House subcommittee held a hearing on codifying the Supreme Court's eight-year-old Beck decision, an unnecessary imposition on unions that clearly was staged to punish the AFL-CIO for its grass-roots legislative mobilization.

Workers' Beck rights have been clearly established by the National Labor Relations Board, and the debate over changing the existing rules is nonsensical, argued Mark Schneider, the Machinists' associate general counsel, before the House Economic and Educational Opportunities subcommittee on employer-employee relations April 18.

"Under the regime established by the board . . . employees are fully aware of their Beck rights and have every opportunity to exercise them in a meaningful manner. And we most emphatically believe that if any modification of the existing rules is in order, it would be in the direction of less regulation, and not more," he said.

In Communications Workers vs. Beck, the court ruled in 1988 that the National Labor Relations Act does not require employees covered by union security clauses to join a union or to support union activities beyond those relevant to collective bargaining, contract administration and grievance adjustment. The NLRB last year set down rules for implementing Beck, using the IAM's procedures as a test case.

The debate over how to enforce Beck has been described erroneously as having something to do with "compulsory unionism," Schneider said. "Unions are and always have been voluntary associations and that voluntariness is firmly rooted in the law," he said.

Workers have the right to speak out and vote on how union money is spent, to run for office in the union or to resign if they don't like how it is being run, he said.

The Beck rights are important ones, said Victoria Bor, an attorney representing the Electrical Workers. "However, the courts and the NLRB, which are the forums charged with enforcing and developing the federal labor law, are protecting these rights. We do not see any need for the legislature to intervene."

The so-called TEAM Act has little to do with "enhancing workplace cooperation and enabling companies to increase productivity and everything to do with eviscerating the National Labor Relations Act's prohibitions against company control over labor organizations," Owen E. Herrnstadt, IAM's legislative counsel, told the Senate Small Business Committee April 18.

The Teamwork for Employees and Management Act, S.295, would lift the 60-year-old ban on certain types of company-sponsored employee committees by amending Section 8(a)(2) of the NLRA.

While technology has changed the workplace since the NLRA was passed in the 1930s, the need to ensure workers' voices are heard through independent worker organizations is more important than ever, he said, because "there are far too many situations where workers' rights are being violated with impunity."

"How can you have real cooperation when one party can dominate and control the other?" he asked. "If an employee cannot freely decide who his or her representative is, how will they be able to freely voice their ideas on making their company more competitive?"

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee rejected April 17, on party-line votes, amendments offered by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and other committee Democrats to make the bill more worker-friendly. Then, by same party-line margin, it voted to send the bill to the Senate floor later this year.

Unions spread word: 'America Needs a Raise'

By David Kameras

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney carried the message "America Needs a Raise" from Boston to Minneapolis to San Francisco, where on the final stop April 16 he presented petitions to put a referendum for a living wage on the California ballot.

"People who get up every day, put in a decent day's work and give a lifetime of loyalty to their employers have been treated like disposable parts or plant equipment, to be trashed or forgotten," Sweeney told a Minneapolis forum on renewing the social contract between companies and workers.

"It is time for Americans to take a look at how corporate America is downsizing the American dream and say three simple words: THIS IS WRONG. And seven more: WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS."

Earlier, Sweeney had delivered a similar message to the Kennedy Library Forum in Boston, as the scion of the Kennedy political family, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), continued his fight to push an increase in the minimum wage through the Senate.

Kennedy attempted to attach the minimum wage provision, which would increase the $4.25 wage floor by 90 cents over two years, to an immigration bill last week, only to see Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.), the Republican presidential candidate, pull the entire bill off the floor. Dole earlier had used a filibuster to block a vote on the issue.

In the House, 14 Republicans on April 17 introduced a bill to increase the wage floor by $1 over two years, and the AFL-CIO quickly called for a vote "without the procedural maneuvers that have kept working Americans from getting the raise they deserve and have earned."

"In light of today's action in the House, combined with the clear 55-vote majority in the Senate in support of a minimum wage increase, it is incumbent on every member of the Congress who supports American working families to insist your leadership schedule a floor debate and final legislative action on this issue," Sweeney said.

The California living wage initiative was one of many highlighted during a two-day conference at AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington April 10-11, as unionists and community activists from throughout the nation detailed state and local campaigns to help lift working families out of poverty.

At every juncture, unionists and their allies are facing determined and well-heeled opposition from the likes of the National Restaurant Association and other big business groups that reap huge profits by paying minimal wages and benefits.

From a ballot initiative in Colorado to an ordinance just vetoed by the governor in Minnesota to an "embryonic" listening project canvassing workers in Manchester, N.H., concerned citizens are networking to amplify a broad grass-roots cry for decent compensation.

Wage policy is "absolutely the single determining issue" this election year, said Randy Ambuehl, president of the Idaho AFL-CIO.

Although struggling in a staunch "right-to-work" state, Ambuehl said the reasons for pursuing the living-wage fight are compelling: it changes the nature of the debate as to what's wrong with the economy, and it counters right-wing distractions, such as gay rights and collective bargaining for teachers, that are used to divide progressive coalitions.

"When you're trying to talk about a living wage, you're only talking about something that's fair and decent" — buying groceries, a pair of shoes — but corporations are selling workers down the tubes, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson told conferees. "The tragedy is, we're letting them do this without raising hell."

"Let's go get 'em," she said.

The AFL-CIO will expand the campaign to give America a raise with a series of town hall meetings around the country, beginning in Birmingham, Ala., at the end of April. An earlier meeting scheduled for Baltimore was postponed. The meetings will give workers a chance to talk about their jobs and their lives, and to offer guidance toward solutions.

"Since 1979, all of the income growth in our country has gone to the top 40 percent of households, and nearly all of that went to the top 20 percent," Sweeney said in Chicago, where he endorsed a proposed Chicago Jobs and Living Wage Ordinance. That plan would steer economic development funds to businesses committed to paying a wage sufficient to keep a family of four out of poverty.

"Living-wage jobs are among the best tools we have for narrowing the growing gap between the rich and the poor in this country," he said.

Several Senate Republicans recently crossed the aisle to join Democrats on a vote to cut off debate and allow a vote on minimum wage increase, but their numbers fell short. President Clinton called on the Republican leadership "to stop blocking a vote and let the majority rule."

Urging senators to vote for a wage increase "for the people in the communities we serve," Arthur J. Reddy, secretary-treasurer of the International Union of Police Associations, noted that law enforcement officers "have a very pragmatic view of its importance."

Those in poverty "are forced to exist in desperate living conditions that are a fertile breeding ground for petty crime, a base for embittered youngsters to give thought and action to their frustration against the cruel poverty through hostile acts against their neighbors, and ultimately an escalation from petty crime to major crime that threatens our very society," he said.

The minimum wage has been stuck at $4.25 since April 1, 1991. In a series of radio messages sent out prior to that anniversary, Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich noted that the increase would bolster full-time earnings by $1,800 a year, enough to buy seven months of groceries. States with a high proportion of low-wage workers, such as Alabama (22.3 percent) and Mississippi (25.2 percent), would see the greatest impact, he said.

Political training puts labor drive in worker hands

By Mike Hall

Fuzzy Herrick is like a lot of union members around the country.

The IUE shop steward has seen thousands of his brothers and sisters downsized out of their General Electric aircraft engine jobs at the Lynn, Mass., plant. He wonders if he is next. His 21-year-old son moved back home and had to take two part-time jobs because he couldn't find decent full-time work.

During the week of April 8, Herrick was among about 40 union members and staff who gathered at the Masters, Mates and Pilots' Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies in Linthicum, Md., to learn what they could do to change this situation.

The second class of the National Labor Political Training Center explored how unionists can help themselves by educating and mobilizing other union members to turn back the extremist assault on working families and get America a raise.

With the middle class confronted with growing economic anxieties and seeing how corporate profits and CEO compensation have skyrocketed, the congressional attack on working families have made "the issues ours this time around," said AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee, chair of the federation's Political Education Committee.

The first session, held March 2-8, involved AFL-CIO field staff, and later sessions are planned. Graduates from these classes will be assigned as coordinators in congressional districts around the country with a goal of building a permanent base of union grass-roots activists.

AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal said the key is communicating to union members that "we're not in anybody's pocket. We're an organization of working families that is going to hold elected officials accountable."

"This is the most massive mobilization of union members ever and you're part of the front lines," he said. "We've got to build the structure, go into every local, every shop floor. You're going to be mobilizing and directing and coordinating this — demonstrations, town hall meetings, press conferences, confrontations, letters, getting people to pledge their time for grass-roots activities to strengthen our unions."



Mike Hall/AFL-CIO News

AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor updates union activists on the congressional assault on workers.

McEntee noted that the current extremist GOP agenda was set after a 1994 congressional election in which the eventual winners "didn't talk about losing jobs. They talked about losing guns. They wouldn't talk about downsizing and the growing gap between the rich and the rest of us, they talked about hot-button social issues." About 40 percent of union members who voted bought that rhetoric, he noted.

"But building trades members didn't vote to kill Davis-Bacon," he said. "The transit unions didn't vote to have their rights taken away. SEIU members didn't vote to have the Service Contract Act killed. Nobody voted to have OSHA killed or their pensions raided. They didn't vote to take away Medicare and Medicaid or have education for their kids taken away. They didn't vote for this."

Herrick, said he tells other union members "there are 'A' issues and 'B' issues. The A issues are jobs, economy, safety. The Bs are the social issues. I tell them when we take care of the As we can deal with the Bs.

It's those "A" issues that are resonating with working families, said Bob Muehlenkamp, assistant to Teamsters President Ron Carey for organizing. He made a presentation on the economic context of politics.

"People are working longer hours, two jobs. Kids can't find full-time work and are at home again," he said.

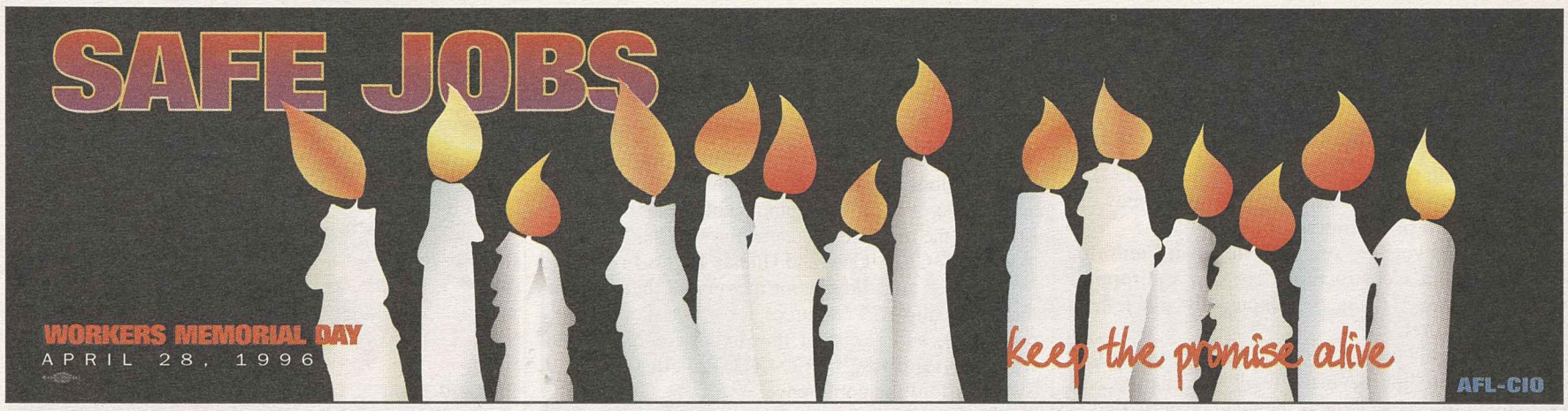
In the past 15 years, productivity is up 24 percent but wages have fallen 9.1 percent, he said. While workers are seeing their standard of living decline, CEOs saw their pay jump from an average of 42 times a worker's salary to 109 times bigger than a employee's paycheck. Their overall compensation was 187 times the average worker's pay. More wealth is concentrated in fewer hands.

The radical Republicans and leaders of corporate America claim their agenda of cutting labor costs, eliminating regulation, assaulting worker rights and cutting taxes on business will bring economic good times to all.

"That's one giant scam — 80 percent of America's families are in a slow decline in living standards," Muehlenkamp said.

In Michigan, "people are starting to see what this stuff (the radical GOP agenda) has done, how it affects their families, their job, their livelihoods," said AFSCME's Barb Smith.

"The receptive ear is there, working people are ready to hear this," said Bill Anderson from the Painters in Washington.



Workers Memorial Day counters safety assault

Continued from Page 1

killed in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

In conjunction with Workers Memorial Day, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has planned activities over several days at the United Nations with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development to initiate an International Day of Mourning. Plans include a candle-lighting ceremony at the World Congress of Churches chapel, a UN ceremony with participation by AFL-CIO Vice President Clayola Brown of UNITE and a forum with a labor panel.

The public pledge to support workplace safety and health was added for the 25th anniversary of OSHA in light of the wholesale assault on the nation's job safety laws. Since radical elements of the Republican party took over Congress in 1995, numerous bills and appropriations measures have attacked OSHA, most egregiously in legislation put forth by Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.) and Sens. Nancy L. Kassebaum (R-Kan.) and Judd Gregg (R-N.H.).

While labor and its allies beat back Ballenger's plans to move forward on his original "reform" legislation, H.R. 1834, the Republican lawmaker's latest measure also spells trouble for America's workers.

The second Ballenger bill would impose cost-benefit requirements on safety standards, slash penalties and cripple enforcement.

Ballenger's "Small Business OSHA Relief Act of 1996" was marked up April 17 by the House Economic and Educational Opportunities subcommittee on work force protections, which he chairs.

Democrats on the panel vociferously opposed the measure. Led by Reps. George Miller (D-Calif.) and Major Owens (D-N.Y.), they said the Republicans were rushing the legislation, having voted it out of committee without holding hearings or incorporating Democratic input. Democratic members moved to postpone the markup and adjourn, but they were voted down.

Hardly the benign measure its supporters claim, H.R. 3234 represents a radical departure from current job safety law by making the cost of regulations to business more important than worker safety and health. Specifically, the bill would:

- Require that the benefits of OSHA standards justify the costs to business.
- Require that OSHA provide violators with up to 100 percent penalty reductions.
- Eliminate citations and penalties for paperwork violations, no matter how important those standards are to preventing fatalities and injuries.
- Codify the state consultation program.
- Prohibit OSHA from establishing inspection quotas.

The measure was passed out of subcommittee along party lines.

Meanwhile, regulatory reform proposals that would paralyze OSHA and the Mine Safety and Health Administration continue to be circulated in the Senate, and action also remains possible on the Kassebaum-Gregg initiative.

JOB SAFETY

Steelmaker faces fine

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has proposed a $1 million fine against an AK Steel plant in Ohio that was the site of a 1995 fire that killed one worker and seriously injured two others.

OSHA issued citations alleging willful and serious violations of its lockout/tagout standard in the October 1995 fire. A separate investigation continues into a Dec. 5, 1995, gas explosion at the plant that injured 14 workers, while a review of the company's employee injury and illness records continues.

The company is contesting the fines.

Indoor air changes urged

The AFL-CIO has filed comments with OSHA seeking an exemption for smaller workplaces from the proposed indoor air rule.

Workers toiling in buildings under 10,000 square feet typically don't face the same exposures to significant indoor-air related hazards, and smaller employers probably would lack the expertise and funding to comply with OSHA's proposal, the federation said.

Employers with smaller-sized workplaces still should have to educate workers and maintain heating, ventilation and air condition, the AFL-CIO said, but no further steps would be required unless there was a complaint or obvious problem.

Pulp mill settles charges

Stone Container Corp. has agreed to pay $690,000 in penalties and implement improvements at facilities in nine states as a result of an April 13, 1994, accident at its Panama City, Fla., plant in which three workers were killed.

A wood chip pulp digester ruptured and the release of pressure blew the digester through the roof, exposing workers to flying debris and hot wood pulp. In addition to the three fatalities, five workers were injured. Workers at the facility are represented by the Paperworkers, Machinists, Electrical Workers and the Office and Professional Employees.

The company has agreed to continue its practice of maintaining, repairing and altering its digesters in accordance with the National Board Inspection Code and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Code.

Visa law costs U.S. workers' jobs

DoL says firms use 'sham' to import cheap labor

By Colleen M. O'Neill

A new Department of Labor report offers support for unions' opposition to a visa program that allows foreign workers to fill unique, high-skill jobs.

That program, known as H-1B, has become a means to a U.S. address for hundreds of thousands of aliens seeking to settle in this country, the DoL report concludes. It calls the program a "sham" that has lowered wages and cost Americans jobs.

According to recent newspaper stories and the DoL, hundreds of companies are turning to such foreign workers as computer specialists, accountants, engineers, models and others with H-1B visas to fill jobs.

The visas allow foreign workers to come to the United States and work and stay for up to six years. They do not have to be paid prevailing wages and can be used to break strikes. Employers are not required to search for qualified U.S. workers.

In reality, the companies use the slots to hire foreign help at cheaper wages, thus allowing them to dump U.S. workers.

"It should be against the law for any employer to lay off a U.S. worker to make room for a temporary foreign worker," said Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich during congressional hearings on immigration last fall. "Anything less than that will leave thousands of critical U.S. jobs at risk."

The subsequently released 12-state audit by the department's Office of the Inspector General showed evidence of abuse in employment-based immigration programs.

In fact, the report said, aliens are "immigrating based on their attachment to specific jobs and then shop their services in competition with equally or more qualified U.S. workers without regard to the prevailing wage," leading to the conclusion that the "prevailing wage may be eroded over time."

Finally, the inspectors found "the program does not always meet urgent, short-term demand for highly skilled, unique individuals who are not available in the domestic work force; instead, it serves as a probationary try-out employment program for illegal aliens, foreign students and foreign visitors to determine if they will be sponsored for permanent status."

Some 65,000 H-1B visas are granted each year, an outcropping of 1990 legislation authorizing the program. The Department of Labor is responsible for administering the program and certifying alien employment to ensure the payment of prevailing wages.

The H-1B reform provisions were offered as amendments to a bill aimed at curbing illegal immigration, but were defeated in committee in March. The illegal immigration bill stalled in the Senate April 16 when it was caught up in debate over Social Security and minimum wage issues.

Changes that would assure high-wage, high-skill workers they would not be replaced with foreign temporary workers may be offered again when the immigration bills begin to move.

In his testimony last October, Reich recommended three changes in current law that would:

- Prevent any U.S. firm from firing or laying off a U.S. worker in order to replace that worker with a temporary foreign hire.
- Require all U.S. companies hiring temporary foreign workers to make efforts to recruit and retain U.S. workers first.
- Shorten the length of the temporary worker visa from six years to three years.

Several unions have weighed in with opinions on illegal immigration. The AFT and Police Associations are urging opposition to a legislative provision to deny education to the children of illegal immigrants.

"We do clearly object to denying any child access to schools and education within our borders regardless of origin," the police union said in an April 2 letter to Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.). "We base our position on immediate pragmatic concerns that can only come from collective years on the streets of America."

The Clinton administration on April 15 vowed to veto any immigration bill containing the provision denying public education.

Likewise, the Professional and Technical Engineers Local 195 has mounted a campaign against privatization of services at the New Jersey State House, specifically with regard to the use of illegal aliens to do the work of laid-off local union maintenance workers.

A raid on the Trenton state house in late March by the Immigration and Naturalization Service resulted in the arrest of 24 illegal immigrants working as janitors for a private contractor.

COURTS

Wage standards case heard

In a case with major implications for labor, the U.S. Supreme Court will decide whether states may enforce their own prevailing wage laws.

The justices voted to review a ruling in California vs. Dillingham Construction that said California's prevailing wage law is pre-empted by the federal Davis-Bacon Act.

The California law allows contractors to pay wages lower than the "journeyman" level to some workers on public projects as long as they can be classified as "apprentices" under a state-approved program.

The case began in 1987, when Sonoma County awarded a contract for construction of a new jail to Dillingham, which subcontracted the audio security work to Sound Systems Media. Sound Systems paid apprentice wages to some employees who were not registered in state-approved programs. The California Department of Industrial Relations withheld money from Dillingham based on Sound Systems' failure to pay the state prevailing wage.

Dillingham sued in 1990 over the withheld money. A federal judge ruled for the state, but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit reversed that ruling last June.

Publix bias suit extended

Female grocery employees at Publix Supermarkets, with help from the Food and Commercial Workers, are expanding a class-action sexual discrimination suit by adding workers in the company's administrative, warehouse and manufacturing operations.

"Publix's discrimination goes way beyond its grocery stores," said Miami attorney Ervin Gonzalez, who represents the plaintiffs in the two suits, Watkins vs. Publix and Shores vs. Publix. The Lakeland, Fla.-based company "should be ashamed for trying to bill itself as a fair and honest employer when gender bias seems so rampant and pervasive throughout its operations," he said.

The U.S. District Court for Middle Florida already has granted class-action status to Publix's female grocery employees, and the new suit could add as many as 20,000 new women to the case.

The UFCW, which has been involved in a four-year effort to organize the grocery chain, defended its role in assisting to develop the suits. "From the corporate offices to the deli counters, from the production line to the check-out lines, women at Publix have come forward," said union spokesman Greg Denier. "UFCW is a worker advocacy organization, and we are leading the fight to create equity and opportunity work places."

No overtime on Nightly News

Television news journalists are artistic professionals and therefore are not entitled to overtime pay as calculated under the Fair Labor Standards Act, a federal appeals court ruled.

The decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit sets aside a lower court ruling granting FLSA overtime rates — time and a half — to three employees of NBC's Nightly News and Weekend Nightly News. The case is Freeman vs. NBC.

NBC argued that the three employees — news writer Jacob Freeman, producer Bernard Brown and field producer Robert Garner — were exempt professional employees and their overtime pay is limited to that set forth in its contract with the Broadcast Employees and Technicians, which represents the workers.

'Organizing is civil rights issue'

By James B. Parks

The future of the labor movement depends on how well unions are able to convince women, immigrants and people of color to organize under labor's banner. That was the message that came through loud and clear at the AFL-CIO's Civil and Human Rights Institute.

"We need to build a labor movement that provides the leadership and resources for a massive wave of organizing and restoring the dream for millions of working families," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the conference.

"That's particularly true when it comes to organizing the new work force, which is increasingly women and people of color," Sweeney said. "If people are going to be able to give their families the time and care they need, . . . if Americans are to reach out across the barriers of class and color and culture to restore our spirit of community, then we are going to have to lift the standard of living for working men and women."

Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, who delivered the keynote, noted that the labor movement has "every color, every race, every ethnic group. And that pluralism — that diversity — is our strength. The American labor movement has a ticket to success — a ticket to justice and fairness for working people — and on that ticket is printed two words: 'coalition' and 'solidarity.' "

It is the quest for economic justice for all that unites the civil rights and labor movements, Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka said. "Numbers tell the story," he said. For Hispanic workers, union members make 21.8 percent more in wages; African-Americans make 18.1 percent more; and working union women make 20.4 percent more. "For anyone, that's a lot of bread and milk and cereal, electric bills and car payments," Trumka said.

The future of labor is "more black, more brown, more female, more lesbian and gay, more immigrant," he said. "We're all working people — the union needs all of us. We're united in union because it's our jobs, it's our homes, it's our kids, it's our parents, it's our heritage, it's our future, and, by God, because it is our responsibility."

Since the largest segment of unorganized workers are women or people of color, said Richard Bensinger, the federation's organizing director, it is critical that the organizing drive be seen as a civil rights issue.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

"Our diversity is our strength," Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson told civil rights conference.

"We will not win if our campaign is about getting more labor standards," he said. "We will win if it is about getting a better standard of living for minorities, women and all workers."

One of the greatest threats to the solidarity needed to grow unions is the use of wedge issues such as immigration to split workers, said Chavez-Thompson and Charles Kamasaki, senior vice president of La Raza.

Many cynical politicians, mostly Republicans, are using the immigration issue to play on legitimate fears about jobs and divide ethnic groups to further their own political agenda, Kamasaki said. He warned that several "hypocritical" pieces of legislation such as "English-only" measures and restrictions on benefits for illegal and legal immigrants would endanger civil rights for all Americans.

The best way to defeat such strategies, Chavez-Thompson said, "is to turn the conversation around — shift the debate — focus on the issues that really count: wages, Medicare, education, workplace safety. When that's where the battle is, it's on the territory that belongs to us, and we win."

Labor denounces immigrant beatings

The labor movement, whose members often have been brutalized for seeking a better life, strongly condemned the beatings of two suspected undocumented Mexican immigrants by sheriff's deputies after a high-speed chase in Riverside County, Calif.

The beatings "hit close to home," AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson said. "America's unions have all too often felt the brunt of police batons when they rained down on janitors peacefully marching in Century City and on peaceful drywall construction workers protesting throughout Southern California.

"Our movement will not tolerate this type of police brutality, nor will we excuse officers because the situation is volatile and fraught with emotion," said Chavez-Thompson, a second-generation Mexican-American. "This is not a question of immigration rights, but of basic civil and human rights."

The Labor Council for Latin American Advancement also decried the climate of politically motivated immigrant bashing that spawns such "brutish" behavior against people "whose only crime is to cross the border to earn enough to feed their hungry families."

Saying it was "horrified" by the beatings, LCLAA said the incident is a "classic example of the dangers inherent in an anti-immigrant climate fostered by those who seek political advantage by scapegoating immigrants, in this case, Mexican immigrants, or by falsely blaming them for all the ills of our society."

"We must acknowledge that this incident is symptomatic of a more widespread illness in the land — the growth of intolerance and racism, most of it focused against minorities and people of color," LCLAA President Ralph F. Jimenez and Executive Director Alfredo C. Montoya said in a statement.

The only way to resolve the problem of undocumented immigration, they said, is to "build up the Mexican economy so that it can absorb and provide a decent standard of living for its work force."

Security concerns remain year after Oklahoma City blast

As federal workers paused for a moment of silence April 19 to remember those killed a year ago in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murray Federal Building in Oklahoma City, most considered their own safety and security.

"As the long-running budget battle continues, many agencies — forced to make cutbacks — may also be forced to abandon necessary security improvements placing federal employees at risk," AFGE President John N. Sturdivant told reporters during an April 17 news conference to mark the anniversary of the bombing that killed 168 people, mostly federal workers and their children.

At AFGE's request, President Clinton issued a proclamation asking "all the people of the United States to observe a moment of silence . . . at 9:02 a.m. Central Daylight Time."

Three federal employees, Steve Nihiser of the Federal Protective Service, Albester Hall-Jones of the Social Security Administration and Tyrone Perkins of the Veterans Administration, told reporters they have seen improved security over the past year, but they voiced concerns over current budgetary constraints.

Nihiser noted that on April 12, one week before the one-year anniversary of the bombing, a federal Mine Safety and Health inspector and his wife were injured in a truck bombing in Vacaville, Calif. An anonymous caller made a bomb threat to the office warning, "You guys are all dead. Timothy McVeigh lives on."

Although the office was evacuated immediately, the inspector was unaware of the threat when he returned from a field assignment to retrieve his pickup truck.

An AFGE security poll, "Security Pulse," asked union members to identify building security improvements made since last year's vicious bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The conclusions provide a snapshot of government workers' concerns.

Some 67 percent of the survey respondents were unaware of the designated security level for their facility. Almost 64 percent indicated there is no building-level security committee in their worksite and over 50 percent indicated they did not know what improvements had been made during the last year.

The union also released a report that recommended limited use of contract guards, centralized recruitment and hiring of police officers, worker participation in security committees and support of legislative measures that provide the necessary funding to maintain security standards.

— **Sharolyn A. Rosier**

Kaiser's greed is dramatized by SEIU pickets

California health workers have taken the offensive in their protracted contract struggles with Kaiser Permanente Inc.

Protest pickets went up April 17 at more than 50 Kaiser facilities across the state on behalf of the more than 30,000 union members working without contracts with the state's oldest and largest health maintenance organization, in an effort to inform the company's 4 million California members of its actions.

"Kaiser is still the richest and largest HMO in the nation," said Sal Roselli, president of Service Employees Local 250, which represents 14,000 Kaiser workers in Northern California. "Instead of setting high standards, Kaiser is racing to lower them — and we aim to stop them."

Some 10,000 maintenance, technical, clerical and patient care workers, members of SEIU Local 399, turned down their "final" contract offer from the company April 11. That proposal called for a wage freeze in the first year and pay cuts of up to 2.5 percent in the four remaining years of a five-year pact.

A discussion sponsored by the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees in late March focused on the drive by for-profit health providers to put profits over people. Dr. Edith Rasell of the Economic Policy Institute and Dr. Quentin Young of Physicians for a National Health Program decried the loss of quality and patient-focused care by such large companies as Kaiser.

In some corporate HMOs, as little as 70 percent of revenue is spent on health care, said Rasell, who outlined the corporate takeover of health care. Companies wield financial power over doctors, including incentives for providing less care for patients — and in some cases forbidding doctors to discuss some treatments — and the high administrative costs.

For workers, that translates into pressure to hold down the bottom line — and wages and benefits — to increase profits. For consumers, that means a drop in quality and treatment, Rasell said.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney touched on the workers' fight during an April 16 appearance in San Francisco. After HMOs began to face intense competition like other corporations, Sweeney said, "Kaiser decides to take the same low road to the bottom by slashing labor costs. . . . What happens? A huge labor-management crisis is created."

"We are working hard to solve the crisis," he said, "but thousands of working families and millions of Kaiser plan members are facing an anxious summer."

Kaiser faces unfair labor practice charges by the National Labor Relations Board for bad faith bargaining. In addition, it has withheld union dues funds and refused to proceed with grievance arbitrations, and continue to take steps to close community facilities and contract out inpatient services to non-Kaiser facilities.

SEIU Locals 250, 399 and 535 have united in a statewide pact to restore quality care and protect quality jobs at Kaiser. Other unions with members at Kaiser include AFSCME, Steelworkers, Food and Commercial Workers, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, Office and Professional Employees, Longshoremen and Warehousemen, AFT and Professional and Technical Engineers.

— Colleen M. O'Neill



John Whitehead\SEIU

Nursing home workers rally April 2 in Harrisburg, Pa., against unfair labor practices by Beverly Enterprises.

Replaced Beverly workers fight back

By Colleen M. O'Neill

With strikers "permanently replaced" by Beverly Enterprises and family members of the nursing home residents and community workers standing by, Service Employees President Richard W. Cordtz vowed April 11 to take the union's case against labor law violations to shareholders of the company.

The shareholder campaign will reach Mellon Bank, Wellington Management Investment Co. and Loomis Sayles Co., a subsidiary of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Co.

A week later, the replaced workers held a Washington news conference with AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) and members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation to protest Beverly's actions.

Simon introduced an amendment to TEAM Act legislation earlier that day to allow the Department of Labor to debar companies like Beverly that violate labor relations provisions from federal contracts for up to three years.

About 1,000 nurses, nursing assistants and dietary, housekeeping and laundry aides — members of SEIU Locals 585, 668 and District 1199P — struck 15 Pennsylvania nursing homes April 1-4. Upon their unconditional return to the Beverly-run facilities, they faced job shifts, a loss of hours and replacement.

Many workers who were permitted to return to their facilities — some 400 were kept out by hired security goons — found they had been shifted from full time to part time, or from days to evenings, maximizing disruptions in their personal lives.

The union gave company officials 10 day's notice before striking and told Beverly the strike would last only three days, officials said. SEIU asked the National Labor Relations Board to seek an injunction to require the company to restore the workers' jobs.

Replaced workers will continue receiving SEIU-provided strike benefits, the union said, and also are eligible for unemployment benefits under Pennsylvania law.

Beverly's moves against the strikers — including two thwarted attempts to gain the judicial upper hand — were just the next step in the heated battle over dignity for workers and patients at the company's facilities, both in Pennsylvania and across the country.

In this case, the SEIU workers have filed more than 350 charges with the NLRB against Beverly, and the strike was in response to the company's egregious treatment of its employees.

On March 16, the NLRB issued a complaint against Beverly concerning practices at 20 of its Pennsylvania nursing homes. A trial is set for May 14.

Chief among those charges is that Beverly attempted to prohibit its workers from speaking publicly about the conditions of its facilities. In retribution against those workers who discussed the homes, Beverly "illegally imposed harsh and restrictive work values designed to silence Beverly workers," the NLRB said in its complaint.

Beverly's desire to shield its facilities from public scrutiny comes amid increasing evidence of questionable practices. For example, a study released in November 1995 by the U.S. General Accounting Office cited Beverly as the nation's leading labor law violator among 14 federal contractors who have trampled on the legal rights of workers.

SEIU-represented workers at the 20 homes have been without contracts since December 1994 and November 1995. Beverly Enterprises operates more than 700 facilities nationwide, including 42 in Pennsylvania. The story for workers elsewhere is much the same as it is in the commonwealth.

In Alabama, for example, workers, patients and their families also have identified numerous management problems. Family members appeared at a news conference March 21 to detail patient care problems and their struggle to win quality care for their loved ones.

A study released at the news conference titled "Dignity for None" revealed major violations of federal nursing home standards, including short staffing. It was based on a three-year review of state inspection reports and Beverly documents.

A Trussville facility was issued some 80 violations or deficiencies for failing to meet patient care standards over a two-year period. The Food and Commercial Workers called on Alabama Gov. Fob James (R) to intervene personally on behalf of residents and workers.

"The residents, family members and caregivers at Trussville need your help," said UFCW Local 1657 President George L. Seidenfaden Sr. in a letter to the governor.

UFCW Local 1657 represents some 800 workers in eight Beverly facilities in the state, and currently is negotiating with the company for a new contract.

NLRB backs AFSCME nurses, calls for bargaining order

An AFSCME nurses' affiliate has won the support of the National Labor Relations Board in its fight against a Kentucky hospital.

The NLRB is seeking a court order to force Columbia/HCA Inc. to bargain with the Nurses Professional Organization at the Audubon Regional Medical Center in Louisville, Ky., charging the company with having engaged in an illegal anti-union campaign during a 1994 election effort.

Columbia/HCA, the nation's largest for-profit hospital chain, threatened reprisals if nurses voted in the union and announced last-minute wage and benefit improvements before the election, the NLRB said.

In March 1994, Audubon nurses subsequently voted 366-220 against union representation.

In a petition for 10(j) injunctive relief filed April 10, the NLRB asked the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Kentucky to order the hospital to bargain with the NPO and to rescind a "job redesign" program started last December that changed assignments and working hours for staff.

The injunction would be in effect while the NLRB completes the disposition of unfair labor practices charges pending against the hospital.

"The Labor Board has fired a shot heard around the hospital world that union-busting will not be tolerated," said AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee. "This action says in no uncertain terms that the Labor Board won't tolerate this kind of abuse of the nation's labor law."

The December restructuring began after hospital officials abolished all nursing positions and set out to reduce the number of licensed nurses providing patient care at Audubon. NPO projected that the hospital ultimately would eliminate some 240 of the approximately 650 registered nurses in the bargaining unit, replacing them with less skilled and unlicensed personnel.

"Patients' lives are at risk when cost-cutting means cutting corners at the bedside," said NPO President Patty Clark, a nurse for 19 years working in an Audubon medical-surgical unit. "There simply aren't enough licensed personnel at the bedside, and in our experience quality of care has definitely deteriorated."

— Colleen M. O'Neill

Wall Street gold lures employers from Main Street

Sweeney: Pension funds should help communities

By James B. Parks

A partnership between workers and stockholders can wrest the economy from "chain-saw managers" who cut jobs, raise profits and increase wealth for a few and replace it with an economy that generates long-term value for everyone, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told an investors' conference.

The recent boom on Wall Street, though beneficial to pension fund investors, is built on shaky ground because workers who produce the wealth are not sharing in it, Sweeney told the Council of Institutional Investors April 2.

"The truth is that working Americans haven't seen any of the large productivity gains made in American business since 1980," he said. "Meantime, corporate profits were up 64 percent from 1989 to 1995. Executive compensation? Up 360 percent since 1980. But worker wages and health benefits and pension security are down. Way down.

"Working Americans know an economy that works like this won't work for long," Sweeney said. "An economy where growth is not shared will soon collapse on itself."

Sweeney criticized the "stupidity" of those who defend corporate excesses by saying the very people they are putting on the unemployment lines through downsizing are winners because of the increased wealth their pension funds gain.

"Whatever working people gain through their benefit plans is dwarfed by their losses — in jobs, wages, benefits and security," he said.

A better path to long-term economic growth and value is for investors to push the management of the companies they invest in to "join us and pursue a partnership with their work force as a whole — a partnership based on mutual respect, cooperation and mutual gain."

That means attacking the two most divisive trends in the economy — destructive downsizing and the wide gap between executive pay and that of workers, Sweeney said.

Corporate executives should be paid reasonably for performance, Sweeney said, but not at a rate that leads to cost-cutting measures such as corporate layoffs. He proposed that executive compensation be based on how well the company's long-term value is increased, not its short-term gain.

Investors should insist that executive compensation be closely monitored by boards of directors, he said, and CEOs should be paid no more than is necessary to attract and retain capable people.

Institutional investors, especially those who represent workers' pension funds, must discourage destructive downsizing, Sweeney said. Downsizing breaks the covenant between shareholders and the workers that is essential to the company's growth, he added.

Downsizing also discourages workers from gaining skills that could benefit the company and cuts activities from the corporate budget that are vital to long-term value, he said.

Unions are committed to positive change, Sweeney said. "But we demand that both the costs and benefits of change are equally shared. We believe economic growth cannot be sustained without rewarding working people's efforts with something more than a pink slip."

In the long run, that will benefit pension fund investors because only a "corporate economy founded on equitable prosperity can create value for investors over the long run."

The council, formed in 1984, has been a strong advocate for corporate reform. Its members, 100 public and union pension funds with combined assets of more than $900 billion, have led the shareholder movement to make corporate leadership more open and accountable.

At this year's meeting, for the first time, a corporate representative was elected to the group's leadership, a move opposed by organized labor. Martin A. Coyle of TRW was elected one of three co-chairs. He defeated Minnesota State Treasurer Michael McGrath by two votes.

William Patterson, corporate affairs director of the Teamsters, and New York City Comptroller Alan G. Hevesi were elected without opposition for the other co-chair slots.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney addresses the Council of Institutional Investors. Several union representatives are on the council, including AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy, seated in foreground at left.

Unions press Kmart on shareholder issues

UNITE and the Teamsters have mounted an effort to reform Kmart's board of directors, and to gain approval for various resolutions, including one on ways to improve the stock price.

The unions dropped an effort to elect attorney Stephen Hester to the board at the May 21 annual stockholder's meeting. "Kmart has placed four new, independent directors on its board since we first informed the company that Stephen Hester would be our nominee," said Michael Zucker, UNITE's director of corporate affairs. "It is clear that the company got our message."

The unions filed three resolutions for consideration: to hold an annual election of all board members; eliminate the retirement plan for nonemployee directors; and undertake a study to examine ways to improve the stock sale, including a sale or merger with another company.

"We believe the existing board of Kmart has run the company into the ground," said William Patterson, IBT's corporate affairs director. "Earnings continue to decline as the company loses market share to Wal-Mart."

IBT owns more than 500,000 shares of Kmart stock and represents some Kmart employees.

UNITE is in negotiations on a first contract for some 550 workers at a Kmart distribution center in Greensboro, N.C. Last November, the union began a series of protests over discriminatory pay practices at the distribution center.

— James B. Parks

Workers' economic power put to work around country

Following a year of record-breaking returns, the AFL-CIO's Housing and Building Investment Trusts broke new ground by investing $100 million in three housing and commercial developments in San Francisco.

Organized labor is proclaiming its "faith and trust in San Francisco," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said in announcing the investment at an April 16 city "economic summit." "The recovery is now reaching California and the Bay Area, so let's make sure it doesn't leave anyone behind," he said.

The trusts will finance a new housing project to replace the run-down Geneva Towers, a residential development in the trendy South of Market district, and a business and residential project in the same area.

The developments will create 500 jobs and 500 housing units ranging from upscale condominiums to low-income subsidized housing.

The trusts also plan to invest in projects to alleviate the housing and economic crisis along the Texas-Mexico border.

The trusts' investment record "stands as testimony to the economic power of workers' pension funds to meet key social and economic priorities of organized labor," Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson said as she broke ground April 9 for the El Azteca housing development in Laredo, Texas.

HIT provided $1.1 million of the $3.4 million total cost of the El Azteca project, which will provide low-income housing for 50 families. The state of Texas, the Department of Housing and Urban Development program, the city of Laredo and several financial institutions provided the remainder of the funds.

Laredo and the surrounding Mexico border area are filled with poverty and inadequate housing, Chavez-Thompson said. "Now for the first time in 40 years, someone is answering the question of affordable housing along the border and I'm proud the AFL-CIO is part of that answer," she said.

"We want to show developers everywhere in Texas that we have the money for these types of projects. What better investment is there than giving people decent and affordable housing — especially in border cities?" she asked.

HIT, in partnership with HUD, plans to invest in two other border housing projects — Corona del Valle in El Paso and Sunrise Homes in Edinburg. The three projects will provide homes for 200 families, Chavez-Thompson said. BIT also is negotiating to help build a 450-room hotel in San Antonio, she said.

Meanwhile, the building trust broke ground April 10 in West Patterson, N.J., for the West Falls Plaza retail center. BIT is providing $12 million to build the center.

The housing trust celebrated its 30th anniversary last year by posting its best performance ever and exceeded the leading fixed-income indices, according to the annual report. The trust's gross return on investments for 1995 was 20.11 percent. The annualized return for three, five and 10 years was 8.99 percent, 9.59 percent and 10.1 percent, respectively.

HIT's total net assets climbed to historic levels in 1995 as well, reaching the $1 billion mark in mid-year and eventually rising to $1.17 billion by year's end, a 25 percent increase over the previous year.

The trust reached another milestone in 1995, building its 40,000th housing unit. The number of participating pension funds also rose to 387, up from 370 in 1994.

Two of labor's priorities, union jobs and affordable housing, were met in a large way through the National Partnership for Community Investment, an alliance the AFL-CIO and HUD. Almost 60 percent of HIT's housing investment activity in 1995 was through the Partnership.

Last year alone, HIT invested more than $227 million in Partnership ventures, creating over 5,000 housing units. In the three years of its existence, the Partnership has generated more than 7,800 new construction jobs and 10,918 new dwelling units in 59 housing developments.

— James B. Parks



SEIU photo

Janitors rally in San Jose, Calif., during a break in SEIU's Justice for Janitors convention.

Janitors set a single-minded goal

Convention: Justice for all under one contract

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The Service Employees' Justice for Janitors campaign continues to take matters in its own hands, leveling the playing field with industrywide bargaining.

Armed with the theme, "One Industry, One Contract, One Union," SEIU Local 1877 began bargaining for a master contract with some 25 contractors in California's Silicon Valley on April 3. SEIU local union presidents from across the country joined them to give a strong message to contractors that the union represents workers at these same companies in other cities.

Meanwhile, janitors rallied outside the meeting as the bargaining committee presented the master contract issues. Master contract issues include family health care coverage, wage increases, a training trust fund, lightened workloads and the rights of immigrant workers.

"This is an opportunity to use organizing gains to win bargaining gains at the table for all workers," said Bill Ragen, director of organizing for the union's building services. "Some of the janitors have family health, and others don't. With industrywide bargaining, we can eliminate the disparities."

The local's 5,000 workers clean the offices of such prominent companies as Apple Computer, Hewlett Packard, Sun Microsystems, Kaiser Permanente, Pacific Bell and major institutions such as Stanford University. Two of the largest janitorial contractors are national companies — American Building Maintenance and International Service Systems.

"While the incomes of corporate CEOs continue to balloon, the living standards of service workers such as janitors fall in a downward spiral," said Andy Stern, SEIU vice president and director of organizing, at a March 30 Justice for Janitors convention in San Jose, Calif.

"It is through campaigns such as that of these janitors that the labor movement will find renewal in its fight for the lives of American workers," he said.

During an April 11 march and rally in downtown Oakland, the janitors brought their children, who led the march and delivered a clock to the Kaiser Center that symbolized the theme "Time for Justice."

The next day, the janitors traveled to IBM's San Jose office, where they protested workloads that have doubled for the 100 janitors. There were once 200 janitors cleaning IBM's office, said Teresa Marshall, a spokesperson for Local 1877.

In fact, the janitors have gone from cleaning 35,000 square feet per night to upwards of 60,000 square feet, she explained. This huge increase, which amounts to 24 to 35 single-family homes each night, leads to injuries and missed breaks.

Other actions are scheduled for April 22 in San Jose and on April 30 when a "March for Justice" in Palo Alto will be joined by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka.

"The janitors have learned over the last five years through escalated militant activity that public attention is needed to organize successfully and to win fair and strong contracts," said Jon Barton, an organizer for SEIU Local 1877.

The union's focus also includes the economic markets in which the industry operates. A white paper released during the convention revealed that commercial office markets are strong in all four counties where these companies are located.

In 1995, downtown Oakland's vacancy rate fell to 13 percent, and in Contra Costa County vacancy rates plummeted to less than 8 percent, according to "Narrowing the Wage Gap: For Less Than One Penny." The national average is 17 percent.

The study shows that a livable wage, family medical benefits and a training trust fund would cost building owners less than one cent per rental dollar.

Actors' Equity, theaters reach pact

Actors' Equity and the League of Resident Theatres have reached agreement on a three-year contract covering some 7,000 actors and stage managers at 64 theaters across the country.

Negotiators reached the final terms after a third round of bargaining ended in late March. The contract had been extended upon its expiration Feb. 25.

Members were voting on ratification during April.

"We believe our members will be pleased with this new proposed contract," said Actors' Equity Executive Secretary Alan Eisenberg. "Actors will receive raises exceeding 9 percent over the life of the contract, improved health contributions and will work under safer conditions."

Wage increases of more than 9 percent for actors in the largest-grossing theaters and 4 percent in the smallest-grossing theaters are included in the pact, along with additional time off for actors during the run of a play or musical, additional compensation for the recording of an original cast album for a musical, new limits on stage managers' hours, language stressing concerns for actors' safety on raked stages and in the use of smoke and fog chemicals and a virtual ban on the use of nonunion nonprofessionals by LORT companies that produce plays in the Broadway theater district.

Current weekly minimum salaries for LORT actors range from $441 to $592 per week.

The LORT facilities include major regional and repertory theaters in 29 states. Approximately 7,000 actors and stage managers have worked under the agreement since 1992, and LORT theaters provided 20 percent of all stage acting jobs for union members last year.

Theaters that operate under the LORT agreement include Lincoln Center Theatre in New York City, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, the American Repertory Theatre near Boston and Arena Stage in Washington.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

Job, income security at top of UAW agenda

Bargaining program targets subcontracting

By James B. Parks

Rejecting the notion that better wages and job security are unattainable in a global economy, the UAW set those two issues as its top bargaining priorities.

"The UAW's commitment to the twin goals of job and income security is more important than ever," the union said in a 200-page 1996 collective bargaining program adopted by a special bargaining convention in Detroit.

The program outlines the goals for contract negotiations this year, including talks with the Big Three automakers for the 400,000 employees the UAW represents. But the bargaining objectives also apply to talks in other areas in which the union has members, such as aerospace, heavy equipment, automotive parts and the public sector.

"The benefits of employment security flow both to employers and workers," the program said. "When workers are treated as a fixed investment rather than a disposable factor of production that can be discarded or replaced at will, management has a strong incentive to utilize its human and capital resources more effectively. Our job and income security programs are built on that premise."

The program calls for immediate wage increases at the beginning of each contract, plus "full equity for productivity gains" throughout the life of each pact.

Profit-sharing no substitute

Noting that the Big Three have profit-sharing plans, the UAW emphasized that such plans are not substitutes for across-the-board pay increases. But the union does call for increasing the percentage of profits shared in existing programs and creating new ones where they do not exist.

The program seeks ways to "fully guarantee" job and income protection for laid-off Big Three workers by eliminating the 36-week cap on supplemental unemployment financial benefits and reducing the number of "permissible weeks of market-driven, volume-related layoffs." The union also wants to extend the same layoff protections to other employers.

On the volatile issue of subcontracting, the union set as a goal the prohibition of contracting out work traditionally performed by UAW members.

The union also wants future contracts to require that work currently contracted out to foreign or nonunion domestic suppliers be returned to UAW-represented shops and that workers have the right to strike over contracting violations.

Subcontracting is a major sore point with the union. Failure to reach agreement over the issue caused workers at two General Motors brake plants in Dayton, Ohio, to walk out for 17 days in March, idling most of the company's assembly plants, forcing the layoff of 177,000 workers and generating losses to GM of up to $50 million a day.

Another key concern is the excessive amount of overtime as the Big Three try to increase productivity with fewer employees. The UAW bargaining program calls on negotiators to seek greater restrictions on scheduling overtime and increased financial penalties for overtime. Automakers currently pay a maximum of $5 per hour penalty to a training fund for overtime work.

In other steps to curb overtime and add new workers, the program calls for openings caused by attrition to be filled by new full-time hires rather than by scheduling more overtime. Other proposals to cut work time include reducing the 40-hour work week without a reduction in pay, adding new holidays and increasing the number of four-day holiday weekends.

Contracts with the Big Three expire in mid-September. Bargaining will begin in June.

BARGAINING

Steelworkers empowered

The Steelworkers overwhelmingly ratified a new 54-month contract with Gulf States Steel that gives workers significant new power in company operations.

Some 1,450 production and clerical workers will receive a 50-cent-per-hour wage increase April 1, followed by increases of 25 cents in each of 1997, 1999 and 2000. Under the previous contract, hourly wages ranged from $12.32 to $18.82.

The contract requires the Gadsden, Ala., company to be neutral in organizing drives at any nonunion company with which it shares a joint venture, even if it only holds a minority interest.

The pact also commits the privately held company to place a union nominee on its strategic planning committee and, if it ever goes public, on its board of directors. The company also agreed not to pay stockholder dividends if the company fails to meet its financial obligations under the contract or fails to invest adequately in the plant.

The union also gained significant concessions on outsourcing. The company agreed to limit future outsourcing and to bring back some contracted services and hire 25 new workers to perform that work.

Unions take on bank

Several AFL-CIO unions have joined the effort to pressure Washington Gas to negotiate a fair contract with members of the unaffiliated Gas Workers, threatening to close their accounts with the utility's lender, Crestar Bank.

Crestar officials deny they're involved in the dispute, "but they're in the middle of it whether they like it or not," said Neil A. Wilkinson, assistant director of the Laborers' Mid-Atlantic region. The LIUNA region has some $3.5 million in various pension, training and heath and welfare funds deposited at Crestar, Wilkinson said.

The Teamsters, with $80 million in Crestar deposits, and the Service Employees, with $30 million, joined LIUNA April 9 in announcing their intention to withdraw their funds from Crestar.

Two small Electrical Workers locals already have closed their accounts with the bank and the move is being considered by the international, as well as by the Communications Workers and Carpenters.

Crestar is intimately linked with Washington Gas through substantial bank loans and two shared members of the boards of directors.

Last June, the utility locked out about 1,000 IUGW members after they rejected the company's contract offer. Workers returned to the job in September and are working under terms of the last company offer.

GM strike averted

Members of Electronic Workers Local 775 ratified a new contract at two General Motors Delphi Chassis plants in Kettering, Ohio.

The IUE, which represents 2,700 production and maintenance workers at the plants, had threatened to walk out if no agreement was reached by April 11. Had the workers struck, the fallout could have shut down most of GM's assembly plants, the same as last month's 18-day strike by the UAW against two other Delphi plants in nearby Dayton.

The pact contains new language strengthening subcontract protection for skilled employees.

Lockheed strike on hold

The Machinists were voting April 21 on a contract proposal with Lockheed Martin after the tentative agreement avoided a strike by 4,800 aerospace workers.

The union would not release full details of the agreement, but union negotiators said they had succeeded in forcing Lockheed Martin to drop its demands to eliminate union jobs by outsourcing 65 janitorial and grounds maintenance jobs.

The tentative agreement, announced April 12, followed three days of round-the-clock negotiations under the auspices of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. FMCS played "an instrumental role in bringing the parties together over difficult issues in what has been a rather rocky set of negotiations," said Billy Blackmon, the union's Lockheed Martin coordinator.

Members of IAM Local 709 in Marietta, Ga., and District 725 in Palmdale, Calif., March 14 rejected the company's "last, best and final offer" and set April 15 as a strike date.



UPIU photo

Locked-out Paperworkers picket outside Trailmobile's U.S. headquarters building in downtown Chicago.

UPIU keeps pressure on Trailmobile

By James B. Parks

Locked-out Paperworkers from Trailmobile brought their case to the company's U.S. headquarters in downtown Chicago.

"We are here to protest Trailmobile's unfair demand to continue a four-year wage freeze for three additional years," said Mike Lewis, bargaining chairman for UPIU Local 7591 in Charleston, Ill. The workers also oppose the company's "malicious wish to impose work-rule changes which could cut our members' income by up to a dollar per hour, and changes that would lock people into their job classifications regardless of how long they had been working," he said.

The wage freeze enabled the financially strapped company to immediately begin to turn a profit. But management, rather than spreading the wealth, tried to extract more concessions from workers.

"This struggle to gain a fair and just collective bargaining agreement is about hard-working Americans maintaining their living standards, not slipping further and further behind," said Local 7591 President Gary Collins. "The labor movement chant that 'America Needs A Raise,' is front-and-center in Charleston this election year."

Some 1,200 workers were locked out Jan. 21, five days after the last contract expired. Trailmobile is owned by the privately held Indonesian-based Gemala Group. The same company bought up Trailmobile's Canadian operations in 1989 and over a four-year-period closed all the Canadian facilities and put 570 unionized employees out on the street.

"We don't want this pattern to be repeated here in the United States. We will do everything we can so that it is not repeated," said Randy Johnson of UPIU's special projects staff.

One month after it bought the U.S. operations in 1991, Trailmobile locked out 20 workers at its Winnipeg, Manitoba, plant after they refused to accept a 24 percent cut in wages. The lockout lasted two years.

In September 1992, the company announced plans to build a $20 million facility in right-to-work Jonesboro, Ark. When the facility was completed in 1993, the company closed its last plant in Canada and moved the work there. Ironically, the Jonesboro plant was successfully organized by the Electronic Workers in 1995.

The locked-out Charleston workers have developed several innovative strategies to push for a fair contract. The April 11 Chicago march was the third since the lockout. Workers twice picketed the posh Lake Forest, Ill., home of Edward Ismanto Wanandi, the youngest brother of the family that owns Gemala and chairman of Gemala North America, which oversees Trailmobile.

The union publicized the company's unfair demands at trade shows in Las Vegas, Louisville, Ky., and Springfield, Ill. It also is soliciting the support of Australian unions that represent workers at Gemala's Century Battery plant, and with workers at Pacific-Dunlop LTD, a giant diversified company that maintains several joint ventures with Gemala.

To help the locked-out workers meet their basic economic needs, the union has set up a lockout fund. Any individual or union wishing to contribute should send donations to Local 7591 Lockout Fund, c/o UPIU Secretary-Treasurer James Dunn, P.O. Box 1475, Nashville, Tenn. 37202.

AFA narrowly rejects United contract

Flight Attendants narrowly rejected a tentative agreement with United Airlines, finding it deficient in the wake of reports that the carrier's profits for the first quarter exceeded Wall Street's wildest expectations.

The vote was 7,400-7,115.

"While United is touting itself to investors as 'the most profitable airline in the world,' it refuses to grant wage increases to its flight attendants," observed Kevin Lum, AFA Master Executive Council president at United. "They can't expect that the flight attendants would accept this hypocrisy."

Although the rejected agreement, reached after four years of negotiations, improved job security by stopping the proliferation of foreign flight bases, many union members found it fell far short of adequately addressing wages, retirement issues and working conditions. Talks now will fall under the Railway Labor Act, with no firm deadline.

"United does not recognize how angry and dissatisfied the flight attendants are with the current situation at the airline," said AFA President Patricia Friend. "Through this vote, the flight attendants have shown United that they want real job security and better wages. Management will soon come to realize that being out of touch with their flight attendant work force is going to cost them dearly."

In other industry developments:

- The Air Line Pilots reached a tentative agreement with Delta Air Lines that would give members a voice on the company's board, improve job security and retirement, offer stock options and a profit-sharing plan and sharply limit givebacks management wanted as it seeks to go head-to-head with no-frills carriers.
- ALPA's Federal Express Master Executive Council has recommended that members reject a tentative pact unless its five-year term is shortened and outstanding grievance issues are resolved.
- Machinists criticized a plan to give Northwest Airlines President and CEO John Dasburg a stock incentive plan at a time when employees are working under wage and benefit cuts of nearly $900 million in order to make the airline profitable. IAM District 143 President Marvin Sandrin described the proposal as "like pouring salt in a wound."
- The Air Traffic Controllers cheered a decision by the Federal Aviation Administration to hire over the next two years up to 600 air traffic controllers, many of them among the 11,000 former members of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization who were fired in 1981 after they went on strike and barred from their trade throughout the Reagan and Bush administrations.

— David Kameras

UNION NEWS

BCTD blasts ABC's '20/20'

A report on Davis-Bacon on ABC's "20/20" April 12 program was "factually biased and factually incorrect," AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department President Robert A. Georgine said in a letter to Hugh Downs, the program's host.

"We have no problems with hard-hitting and fact-finding reporting, but we won't accept yellow journalism — especially when a conflict of interest on your producer's part contributed to a one-sided presentation," the letter states.

Even allowing for "20/20" Producer Mark Golden's admission that reporter John Stossel "had a slant on the story," Georgine said he was not prepared for such a "sloppy, erratic and unprofessional" report.

Conflict resolution targeted

AFL-CIO President Emeritus Thomas R. Donahue joined with William L. Lurie, former president of the Business Roundtable, and veteran labor mediator Theodore W. Kheel in launching a new Foundation for Prevention and Early Resolution of Conflict.

"PERC's mission is to build bridges," Donahue said. "As our society becomes ever more conflict-oriented, we simply have to find better means of settling our differences."

PERC's focus will include labor-management, business, community, environmental and civil rights dispute prevention and resolution. The organization also has entered into a strategic alliance with Cornell University, which plans to establish a Cornell/PERC institute to study the prevention and resolution of conflict.

Donahue and Lurie will serve as co-chairmen. Kheel will serve as president.

Toyota builds union

The AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department reached a project labor agreement covering the construction of Toyota Motor Corp.'s T100 pickup truck manufacturing facility near Princeton, Ind.

The construction, valued in excess of $700 million, is scheduled to start this spring and be completed in 1998. The new facility, a manufacturing and assembly plant for Toyota's mid-size pickups, will have the capacity to produce 100,000 trucks annually.

BCTD President Robert A. Georgine, who chaired the union negotiating committee, said the agreement is built on 10 years of successful construction and harmonious labor relations under a similar agreement at Toyota's billion-dollar facility in Georgetown, Ky. First negotiated in 1986, that agreement remains in effect today, covering the Kentucky plant's continued expansion.

USPS delivers $4 chisel

Over the strong objection of the Letter Carriers and the Postal Workers, the U.S. Postal Service delayed the effective date of the first cost-of-living adjustment from March 2 to March 16.

As a result, each and every USPS employee was shortchanged $4.

The unions made clear that the delay violates their national agreements, and said they would seek retroactive relief for all postal workers through the grievance-arbitration procedure.

Postal management argued that the delay was caused by the two-week delay in the Department of Labor's publication of the consumer price index. The COLA is tied to the index.

AFGE begins election bid

AFGE President John N. Sturdivant handed out leaflets during the morning rush hour April 8 at a Virginia commuter rail station to kick off the union's morning leafleting program.

"The last two shutdowns were a wake-up call to all government employees. Now more than ever, government workers can see and feel the direct link between the ballot box and the bread box," said Sturdivant.

The program is designed to educate federal employees about political issues and encourage them to register to vote and to be part of a hoped-for record turnout of government workers on Election Day.

This new activism by the union comes after passage of Hatch Act reform in 1994. Previously, federal workers were prohibited from participating in federal politics. Now they are free to run for public office, participate in voter registration drives, join political parties, attend rallies and political meetings and to express opinions about political candidates.



UNITE photo

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson speaks to reporters inside a UNITE-organized garment shop during a tour of union and nonunion shops in California.

Good shops battle sweatshops

By Muriel H. Cooper

A tour of the California garment industry revealed the good, the bad and the ugly to AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

As she toured Deanna Dee/Fleurette, a UNITE shop that makes women's coats for such high-end stores as Nordstrom, Sak's Fifth Avenue and Bullocks, she saw management "that treated their workers like human beings." The family-owned Los Angeles factory has been unionized for 50 years.

In comparison, she saw terrible conditions and a young school-aged boy working at neighboring garment factories.

"When I looked at the working conditions and smelled the working conditions and saw the anguish and fear in the workers' eyes, I felt my throat get tight," she said.

"These factories are run by people without shame that exploit their workers." She said Latinos have a word for those without shame — "sin verguenzas."

The AFL-CIO and UNITE have joined with the Department of Labor and consumer groups to educate consumers about the conditions inside of hundreds of sweatshops across America.

This common thread feeds off the spool of decent and safe working conditions, corporate responsibility, stronger law enforcement, global responsibility and worker empowerment.

"Consumers do not want to buy goods made in sweatshops," Chavez-Thompson said. "Retailers and manufacturers have the power in the industry and must be responsible for the working conditions under which their products are made," she said.

UNITE, as the historical defender of workers in the needle trades, has taken the lead with the release of art that will be reproduced for T-shirts and shopping bags.

The design mixes words and images with the message, "These clothes were not made by exploited women and children in non-union sweatshops."

The union also is spearheading a public education campaign and working with coalitions to distribute written materials and a video.

Last month, DoL released a public service announcement called "Clues for Consumers" — tips for shoppers who want to support efforts to end sweatshops.

The National Consumers League — composed of labor, consumer and religious organizations — plans to distribute the materials.

"We think it's very clear that this message is very important to consumers," said NCL President Linda Golodner. "Consumers want the freedom to buy a brand without the fear that they will be buying something that contributes to the exploitation of women and children at the sewing machine."

In addition, DoL has asked apparel retailers and manufacturers on the agency's Fashion Trendsetters lists — those retailers and manufacturers taking measures to end garment sweatshops — to include a "NO SWEAT" logo on their products and ads.

"There are manufacturers and retailers in the garment industry who take worker issues seriously and are working with us to eliminate the sweatshop menace," said Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich. "We want to congratulate those who are making a difference for some of the most powerless workers in our society."

Last summer, about 70 Thai workers were discovered working in slave-like conditions in a Southern California sweatshop. The news shocked the nation and brought national attention on a problem DoL has continued to uncover throughout the United States.

A federal district court in Los Angeles recently ruled that clothing companies that purchased goods produced by the Thai workers were joint employers of the workers and could be held liable for back wages and other labor law violations, making it one of the first rulings holding a manufacturer responsible even if the work was done through an operator.

Meanwhile, a bill is before the Labor Committee in the New York state senate that would impose joint liability for penalties and wages aimed at manufacturers aware of the unlawful practices of their contractors.

The "Clues" and other consumer information will be available on the Internet through the Labor Department's home page (http://www.dol.gov), and the radio spots are available by calling 800/877-9002.

RUGMARK debuts on Masih anniversary

On the first anniversary of the murder of 12-year-old child labor activist Iqbal Masih, the AFL-CIO and consumer groups marked an historic breakthrough in the fight against the exploitation of children.

"For the first time, carpets made without child labor, and bearing the smiling RUGMARK label, are available for sale in the United States," AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson announced.

Hand-knotted imported carpets from India and Nepal bearing the RUGMARK label were displayed during a silent auction April 16 in Washington, sponsored by the Child Labor Coalition and the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights. The RUGMARK label assures consumers that the rugs were made without child labor.

The effort to import carpets made without child labor is part of a yearlong campaign by the National Consumers League, government officials, union representatives and religious leaders to end child servitude.

Masih spent half his life in bondage, having been sold at the age of 4 and shackled to a carpet loom for almost six years before he gained his freedom. He became a leader in the struggle to end the horrors of child labor for hundreds of thousands of his fellow Pakistanis.

Masih was gunned down on Easter Sunday, April 16, 1995, as he and two friends rode bicycles through their village. Pakistani officials have never fully investigated the shootings.

Rail strike looms as TCU freed from mediation

By David Kameras

Rail workers are bracing for a possible national strike after the National Mediation Board released the Transportation Communications Union from mediation, as management continues to resist productive negotiations.

"The time is fast approaching when TCU carmen and clerical members will be able to move our fight for a new agreement away from Washington, D.C., and into the railroad towns and cities of America, where our members can demonstrate just how determined they are to obtain a fair contract," TCU President Robert A. Scardelletti and Assistant President Richard A. Johnson said in a joint statement.

The Electrical Workers, Machinists, Railroad Signalmen and Sheet Metal Workers also have been released from mediation.

TCU opened talks Nov. 1, 1994, only to be told by carriers that its members were overpaid and that work-rule concessions and huge rollbacks in health and welfare coverage would be needed. Last August, local officers voted 403-2 to strike, and the union declared an impasse.

Finally acting on a request more than eight months old, the NMB released TCU from mediation, and the union could be free to strike May 9.

The National Carriers' Conference Committee, which represents most of the major freight railroads, is hoping to get the White House to establish a presidential emergency board, which would throw another 60-day delay into the works.

The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees also is seeking a release from mediation.

Members of the United Transportation Union turned down a tentative pact with NCCC covering conductors, engine service personnel, trainmen and yardmasters, and their union has agreed to binding arbitration over wages and work rules. The Locomotive Engineers were voting on a tentative agreement with the carriers.

Separately, UTU conductors and brakemen rejected by a 78 percent margin a five-year tentative pact with the Illinois Central that included provisions for hourly pay and elimination of work rules in exchange for a one-time payment of $60,000.

Meanwhile, TCU members returned to work at the Koppers tie treatment plant in Somerville, Texas, ending a 21-day strike after management threatened to immediately hire permanent replacements.

"The economic power of corporations is enormous and growing every day," Scardelletti told the workers. "Companies can hire permanent replacements for strikers at the stroke of a pen. So many workers have lost their jobs in the past decade that there are hundreds of unemployed workers willing to take the jobs of tens of striking workers."

Scardelletti vowed the union "will use the strength and experience forged in this struggle every single day as we continue the fight for economic justice."

UNION NEWS

Trumka rallies Pa. workers

Workplace resolutions and a call to fight for America's working families topped the agenda at the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO's 32nd convention.

"We will raise the visibility and public profile of unions so that folks can more clearly see how we are vehicles for improving the jobs, working conditions and lives of American families," vowed AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka. "People should know that labor's victories are America's victories."

Trumka urged the 1,200 delegates at the Philadelphia gathering to "organize, mobilize and take this country back for working men and women."

Per capita was raised a nickel per member per month, from 25 cents to 30 cents, starting in July; councils' per capita was raised from $25 to $50. The UAW also was welcomed back into the state federation as its councils reaffiliated.

In other action, the convention created separate working organizations — or conferences — similar to departments, to handle industrial, food retail service and transportation issues. In resolutions, delegates called for the development of an associate membership program in Pennsylvania in concert with Union Privilege and the creation of a U.S. Postal Service stamp for Mother Jones.

Other speakers included Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich, Gov. Tom Ridge (R), Rep. Thomas Foglietta (D-Pa.), AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee and Building and Construction Trades Department Secretary-Treasurer Paschal McGuinness.

'Right to work' assailed

State AFL-CIOs are countering a million-dollar campaign by the anti-union National Right to Work Committee to pass the national "right-to-work" bill.

In Montana, the state federation upstaged the April 17 right-to-work news conference in Helena with a pre-emptive news conference of its own the day before.

"What is really at stake here is the freedom of workers to join together to form organizations that can deal effectively with their employer on the issues of wages, benefits and conditions of employment, and to defend those contracts from the kinds of attacks being made on working families by this Congress," Montana AFL-CIO President Don Judge told reporters.

The NRWC is conducting its media blitz in 21 states.

Meanwhile, the Oklahoma state Senate voted 25-18 against a Republican attempt to attach a right-to-work amendment to legislation on binding arbitration for police and firefighters.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger (left) discusses organizing problems with Kate Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University, Daniel Cornfield of Vanderbilt and Sheldon Friedman, AFL-CIO economist.

Research bolsters union organizing

By Muriel H. Cooper

As the labor movement prepares its most ambitious organizing efforts in decades, it paused to consider the information and analysis it will need to succeed.

A Union-University Research Conference on Union Organizing March 31-April 2, sponsored by the AFL-CIO and Cornell University, brought together organizers and academics to cover such topics as defeating employer opposition in an adverse legal climate and organizing women and low-wage workers.

"Your agenda reflects an awareness of the role of research in the new world of organizing," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the participants. The labor movement needs to have more research done internally and externally to increase its knowledge about workers and employers, he said.

"We need to know more about the employers as well as the workers we are organizing," Sweeney said. "We need to develop new strategies for dealing with anti-union campaigns. We need to organize and mobilize community support for our organizing efforts. And, most important, we need new ways of dealing with the seemingly 'worker friendly' employer initiatives like the TEAM Act that we are confronting in the Congress."

The emphasis on changing attitudes, methods and strategies was echoed throughout the workshops and papers presented to the participants.

"The characteristics that make a successful campaign are pro-active workers who are willing to create a culture of organizing," said Indiana University's Bruce Nissen, who presented two case studies involving volunteer members working on organizing campaigns.

Katherine Sciacchitano of the University of Wisconsin School for Workers argued that campaigns should be extended into the communities. She cited a case in Milwaukee in which local workers involved a broad base of community groups to lend support to their effort.

Richard Bensinger, the AFL-CIO's organizing director, called for unions to conduct larger campaigns that target entire industries. "We should be looking to workers from local unions for greater participation in organizing efforts," he said.

New approaches are necessary because the old methods aren't working, said John Wilhelm, western region director of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees. Unions cannot afford to limit their organizing efforts around the National Labor Relations Board election process, he said.

Instead of "using the NLRB as a crutch," we need to focus on "leverage based on research of the employers, the industry" and the local area, Wilhelm said. He encouraged unions to hire trained researchers.

In a program that brought "views from the trenches" to the conference, several front-line organizers shared their perspectives on what made their organizing campaigns successful. They included Dee Dee Roberts from UNITE, Kaye Jaeger from the Service Employees, Yanira Merina and Amelia Estrada from the Laborers and Anthony Montoya from AFSCME.

Winning SEIU organizing program no Mickey Mouse operation

Orlando, Fla.

Two Disney World custodians and an amusement ride operator at the theme park were key players in organizing Lake County School District workers, effectively doubling the size of their Service Employees local.

In its first foray into the public sector, SEIU 362 won the mail ballot representation election by a 665-189 margin. It also marked the first major organizing drive for the local since it began a rebuilding program three years ago. The 1,300 new members join the 1,300 workers employed at Disney.

"This is about developing a local union's organizing capacity," said Mike Duffy, president of Local 362. "Debra Clark, Rick Rowland and James Sombelon are rank-and-file members who live in the community and went out and organized the workers," he said of the three Disney employees.

"It's good to commit resources, but you have got to tap into existing members to organize. It makes economic sense and this is the way we plan to do it."

The organizing drive was sparked last fall when the Lake County School Board gave the teachers a larger pay increase than the classified employees who perform nonteaching duties. The campaign also was fueled by such long-simmering issues as favoritism, a lack of grievance procedure and job insecurity.

"We want a union because we want to be treated like adults," said Mark DuFresne, a bus mechanic. "Now we can sit down as equals and bargain a binding contract with the school board."

"Folks have waited a long time for the chance to really have a say over their working conditions and they are excited," said Duffy. "We are already drawing up contract proposals and look forward to bargaining a contract with the school district."

— Muriel H. Cooper



LIUNA photo

New York City asbestos workers rally for an industrywide union contract with the Laborers.

New organizing tactics key to win

Continued from Page 1

and abatement contractors in the New York City area enjoy a 75 percent market share. "We knew we had to organize to scale and go after the industry, and not just one contractor at a time," said Keiffer.

Unions need to develop similar strategies, conducting larger campaigns in targeting whole industries, said Richard Bensinger, AFL-CIO organizing director.

"While the AFL-CIO is asking unions to put huge resources into organizing, money is not enough," said Bensinger. "Leadership must be developed and new organizers must be trained. We need talented people to help us run campaigns."

Worker/organizer Teodulo Fiesta was able to communicate how the union can make a difference.

"I've worked in the asbestos industry for 12 years," he said. "It's dangerous work, and many contractors pay low wages and don't offer medical care. Today the workers are saying 'thank you' to us for helping get the rights they need for their jobs, their families and their futures. That's what it is about — families and futures."

During a three-week period, dozens of volunteers went door to door, making 1,600 housecalls. "The only way we could do this was through the rank and file," Keiffer said. "We had one Polish volunteer who went through his neighborhood and signed up at least 25 workers. The cultural connection was very important."

The union also exposed the seedy working conditions and called City Hall on the carpet for cutting funds in the Department of Environmental Protection for field investigators.

"We tried to keep public attention on the horrible working conditions created by nonunion contractors," Keiffer said.



Jack Miller/Miller Photography

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka is flanked by Spanish and Polish interpreters as he addresses a victory rally of asbestos workers.

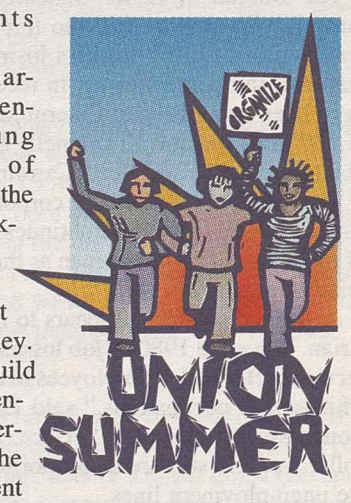
"We ran work stoppages, strikes, picket lines at about 20 contract sites," he said. "We would go to schools and public works projects where workers were not being paid the prevailing wage and protest. By the time we finished, most of the contractors were ready to be part of the settlement and not of the fight. It was almost a peace agreement."

Bensinger praised Trustee Steve Hammond, who "has done a great job not only of reforming the local, but also converting it into an organizing powerhouse."

Union summer warming up as sites readied

Union Summer, the AFL-CIO's summer organizing campaign involving young workers and college students, will announce its site selections during an open house at federation headquarters May 1.

About 900 union members, college students and children of union members have applied for the program, which is modeled after the 1960s Freedom Summer voting rights fight.



"We are harnessing the energy of young Americans of conscience for the cause of working people," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney. "We want to build into the next generation an understanding that the labor movement is at the heart of the struggle for social justice."

The workers will spend three weeks organizing for workplace rights and social justice. They will be assigned to a site and receive stipends of $210 a week, free housing and several days of training.

Site selection is being weighed on the basis of geographic location, said AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger. Other factors include the ability to use activists productively, new organizing or first-contract fights, large-scale efforts, new ideas and risk-taking, campaigns designed to attract low-wage workers, young workers, women, people of color and recent immigrants, and the willingness to share costs with the AFL-CIO.

"For the first time in history, young people are going to face a lower standard of living than their parents, and it is vital that they play a pivotal role in sparking social change," Bensinger said.

Union Summer will be the most visible part of a new union organizing strategy being led by the AFL-CIO. Sweeney has created a new organizing department, which will administer a separate fund to boost affiliates' efforts, and has increased funding for the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute.

June 1 is the deadline for applying for Union Summer assignments. For more information, call 800/952-2550.

Public employees denounce effort to deny their rights

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Public employees would become "second-class citizens" if the preliminary labor law recommendations of a federal panel are adopted, union leaders testified.

The recommendations by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations "indicate that our nation's public employees do not deserve or need standard wage and hour or workplace safety benchmarks," said Al Bilik, president of the AFL-CIO Public Employee Department, at the March 26 hearing.

The independent commission's preliminary recommendations, which were released Jan. 24, would repeal provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act that extend coverage of these statutes to state and local governments.

James Sheedy, president of the Service Employees/AFT New York Public Employee Federation, and Lee Saunders, assistant to AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee, joined Bilik in blasting the panel's recommendations.

Saunders quoted comments from Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich warning that if the recommendations are approved, state and local workers would become "second-class citizens," compared with their federal or private-sector counterparts.

"We believe that any government in its role as employer should be treated like any other employer, and that all employees should be treated the same," Saunders testified. While Congress moved last year to apply labor laws to congressional employees, the ACIR preliminary report "advocates moving in the other direction for state and local employees."

The ACIR report also stands in marked contrast to the Clinton administration's practice, with workers and their unions involved in Vice President Gore's reinventing government project from the very start, Saunders added. "In the ACIR's case, its thinkers' and critics' sessions never reached out to state and local government employees or their representatives for input, comment or recommendations."

The commission also recommended "more flexibility" or more funding be given to states in enforcing seven other laws, including the Clear Air Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act. The continued threat of air pollution in the United States, along with the long history of the failure of states to implement federal water quality and air pollution standards, should serve as a warning against returning control to the states, said Sheedy, whose union represents more than 55,000 professional, scientific and technical workers.

"The federal government did not exert control over the air pollution control policy until 29 states failed to submit plans to implement the national air quality standards called for in the 1976 Air Quality Act," he said. "Why does the ACIR staff feel it would be any different in 1996, when states are even more strapped for resources and are vigorously competing to attract private industry, often lauding their 'business-friendly approach' over those states trying to attract business as well as protect the environment?"

Pointing to the fact that one-third of all public employees in the country are denied the legal right to collective bargaining, Bilik explained, there is "no foundation for the assertion that states will act responsibly and provide basic workplace rights to public employees."

Other groups testifying before the panel included environmental, civil rights, disability advocate and community organizations.

ECONOMY

Steady employment rate offers little comfort

By David Kameras

Unemployment, continuing a two-year pattern of little change, rose a scant 0.1 percent, as businesses took credit for creating 140,000 jobs.

But manufacturing jobs dipped and more than half of the new positions were part time and/or in often low-paying services, AFL-CIO chief economist Rudy Oswald pointed out. "The employment picture is much weaker than the newspapers and Wall Street emphasize," he said.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 820 mass layoffs occurred in the third quarter of 1995, resulting in 151,774 workers losing their jobs, more than half in manufacturing. In recent weeks, job cuts have been announced at Caterpillar Inc. in York, Pa., (1,100 jobs) and at R.R. Donnelly & Sons Co. printing plants in Arizona and North Carolina (about 950 jobs).

The continued pattern of corporate mergers, relocations and downsizings continues to deprive workers of any sense of comfort, even as the jobless rate holds relatively steady.

And the discomfort appears to be unusually egalitarian. Since the 1980s, "job losses have spread to the service sector and to employees in traditionally stable, white-collar occupations," said Linda Levine of the Congressional Research Service. Nonetheless, blue-collar workers still are disproportionately falling into the unemployment lines.

A Princeton University study found that the rate of job displacement from 1991 to 1993 was greater than that during the 1981-83 recession, which was the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

Even with the prospect of new jobs, insecurity is fed by the knowledge that a pay cut is likely in the offing, Levine said. "Measured in terms of wages and hours worked, over half of workers re-employed in February 1994 who had been permanently separated from full-time wage and salary jobs in 1991-92 were not doing as well as they had on their former jobs."

These hard times prompted labor troubadour Joe Glazer to pen a new song:

I've been downsized — re-engineered
I've been downsized — out on my ear
I've been downsized — my job is history
I'd like to downsize the man that downsized me

"Corporate responsibility" has become a common slogan as workers, civic groups and communities cry out for a restoration of the social compact that used to balance the interests of shareholders with those of employees, and President Clinton scheduled a conference this month highlighting "many of America's most successful businesses (that) have shown that you can do well by doing right by employees and their families."

Clinton said companies should ask themselves, "Are there things I can do to support the economic security of the families of the people who are working for me? Are there things the government could do . . . to create a climate in which it would be easier for me to do this and still do well?"

He called for companies to provide a safe workplace, decent wages, health and pension benefits, child care, training opportunities and to avoid layoffs.

A substantial number of the 62,000 factory jobs lost in March was related to the now-settled UAW strike against General Motors. Nonetheless, manufacturing employment is down 325,000 over the year. Employment has grown by only 9.6 million in the five years since the end of the last recession, much slower than in similar recoveries, and most of that was in the service sector. Manufacturing actually had a net loss of 0.3 million.

In addition to the 7.5 million officially counted in March as unemployed, there were 4.5 million on involuntary part-time and 1.7 million who had given up their search for work, for a total of 13.7 million affected by partial or total unemployment, Oswald said.

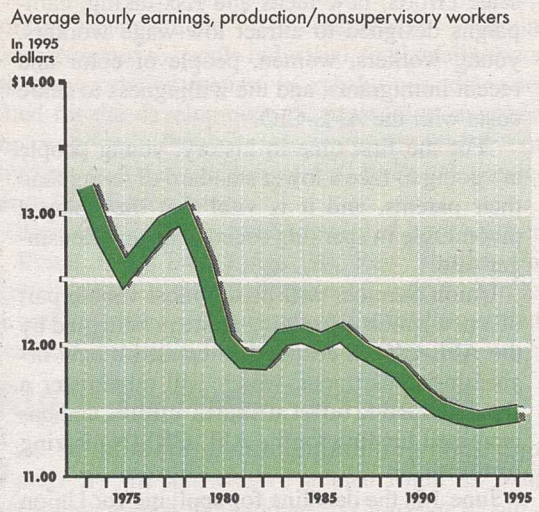
Under a new alternative method being used by BLS that takes these more marginal workers into consideration, the unemployment rate reached 10.3 percent.

The jobless rate rose for adult men (4.9 percent to 5 percent), teenagers (16.6 percent to 17.5 percent), African-Americans (10.3 percent to 11.1 percent), African-American men (10.1 percent to 10.9 percent), African-American women (7.8 percent to 8.4 percent), African-American teenagers (33.6 percent to 28.4 percent) and Hispanics (9.7 percent to 10 percent). It remained steady for adult women (4.8 percent), white men (4.3 percent) and white teenagers (13.4 percent) and declined for whites (4.9 percent to 4.8 percent) and white women (4.3 percent to 4.1 percent).

DATA

Hourly earnings are declining

Average hourly earnings, production/nonsupervisory workers



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The decline in real earnings over the past 17 years has put severe constraints of American working families. Economist Juliet Schor found that one-fourth of all full-time workers spent 49 or more hours a week on the job in 1990, with almost half of these working 60 hours or more.

Real Earnings	
March	-0.5 percent
March '95-March '96	-0.2 percent
Since March '79	-14.5 percent
Merchandise Trade Deficit	
January '96	$14.4 billion
December '95	$8.5 billion
Unemployment Rate	
March	5.6 percent
March (Total Affected)	10.3 percent
February	5.5 percent
Consumer Prices (CPI-W)	
March	+0.5 percent
February	+0.2 percent
Producer Prices (Finished Goods)	
March	+0.5 percent
February	-0.2 percent

AFL-CIO NEWSGRAFIC

Trade and credibility gaps widening

By David Kameras

The Commerce Department reported the U.S. trade deficit in January was the biggest in six months, even as trade ministers intent on spreading the gospel of free trade were greeted with the news that most Americans think free trade doesn't net an increase in jobs.

The officials were meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, to advance a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, which would extend throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The results of the March 21 meeting "were disappointing to workers," said Greg Woodhead, a member of the AFL-CIO Task Force on Trade, who was in Cartagena. Labor ministers were blocked from presenting their views, and their trade counterparts declined to establish a working group on worker rights, an objective strongly pushed by then-U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor. Instead, they agreed only to keep worker rights "under consideration."

"We consider that the way the FTAA is being implemented, consulting the employers while at the same time excluding the unions and other sectors of the civil society, will only generate worsening economic and social situations in our countries and especially for the workers," said Luis A. Anderson, secretary general of the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers.

The poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, found that 42 percent think that trade pacts result in fewer U.S. jobs, while 55 percent think free trade agreements do more to boost U.S. imports than exports. Fully 58 percent think their government should not approve trade pacts with Latin American countries this year.

The poll results were announced by the Bank of Boston at an Americas Business Forum it sponsored in advance of the ministerial meeting.

Tellingly, 48 percent said they were less inclined toward free trade based on their knowledge of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which has been highly touted as a jobs-creating machine, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which spawned the World Trade Organization.

Perhaps they had been reading the newspapers. Last month, Whirlpool Corp. joined scores of other businesses in the flight south when it announced it is shifting production of smaller refrigerators from Evansville, Ind., to Mexico, at a cost of 265 jobs.

Merchandise trade with Mexico in January fell short by $1.3 billion, compared with $723 million a year earlier. Multilaterally, the deficit was $14.4 billion, up from $13.8 billion in January of record-setting 1995.

A new study edited by researchers at the Institute for Policy Studies and the University of Illinois-Chicago finds:

- Claims of NAFTA-related job creation are false.
- NAFTA was a factor in the Mexican economic crisis, which has accelerated U.S. job losses to Mexico and increased pressure on Mexican workers to emigrate north.
- Predictions of higher wages and better working conditions have fallen short as employers use NAFTA against workers through "whipsaw bargaining, or threatening to shift production to Mexico unless unions agree to concessions."
- New NAFTA institutions on labor and the environment have proven to be toothless in coercing enforcement.

"This report confirms the worst fears of the majority of people who opposed NAFTA," said John Cavanagh of IPS.

The report does note that the labor side agreement, while weak, "has some positive value and should be utilized to the hilt."

A coalition of four workers' rights groups has called on the United States to hold high-level talks with Mexico to pursue "clear evidence" that Mexico is not complying with the accord.

The coalition, which earlier had filed a complaint charging Mexican government collusion with Sony Corp. to prevent workers there from forming an independent union, claims that labor courts that rejected the workers' application were made up of representatives of a rival, government-associated union, "part of a pattern of abuse in Mexican labor administration which is in clear and grave violation of the obligations Mexico assumed under the (accord)."

The United States is seeking to link worker rights and trade through the WTO, with an eye toward a ministerial in Singapore in December. "Let me be extremely candid here," Kantor told the House Ways and Means Committee last month. "There has been tremendous resistance, especially from developing countries, to have a working group on worker rights."

His prognosis was echoed by Michel Hansenne, director-general of the International Labor Organization. "Those who advocate the inclusion of a social clause in the next round should not expect that it will be done quickly or easily," he told a conference in England.

U.S. officials noted that U.S. labor law is currently under review by congressional Republicans intent on scrapping long-standing work standards. "We're fighting a rear-guard battle to ensure that we still have a 40-hour work week," Maria Echaveste of DoL's Wage and Hour Division said.

RESOURCES

The **George Meany Center for Labor Studies** will offer 29 programs during the **Spring/Summer 1996 Semester**, with courses ranging from organizing to labor relations. Twelve programs also will be held at the Western campus in Palo Alto, Calif. Contact the Registration Office at 301/431-5422; or FAX your request to 301/431-5411.

The University and College Labor Education Association and the AFL-CIO Department of Education will sponsor four **1996 Regional Summer Schools for Union Women**. The summer schools and contacts are as follows: Western Women's Institute, June 5-9 at San Francisco State University, Brenda Cochrane at 415/338-2885; Southern School for Union Women, Aug. 11-16 at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, Brenda Moon at 202/637-5331; Northeast Women's School, July 21-26 at Pennsylvania State, Frieda S. Rozen at 814/865-5425; and the Midwest School for Women Workers, July 28-Aug. 2, Jean Troutman-Poole at 219/237-4469.

Lexis-Nexis has a new **Alternative Dispute Resolution and Mediation Library** that includes case law and statutory guidelines, the Federal Arbitration Act, Journal of Dispute Resolution and a number of American Arbitration Association publications.

The Best Woman for the Job — Portraits of Non-Traditional Working Women exhibit will run through April 28 at the Botto House, 83 Norwood St., Haledon, N.J. 07508. The exhibit is on loan from the Baltimore Museum of Industry. For more information, call 201/595-7953.

CONFERENCES

Workplace Learning: The Strategic Advantage, sponsored by the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute and several AFL-CIO affiliates, will be held April 29-30 at the Hyatt Regency in Milwaukee. The conference is designed to help attendees learn practical information about planning, implementing, evaluating and negotiating workplace learning initiatives. For more information, call 608/263-2929 or 800/446-0399.

African-Americans, Labor and Society: Organizing for a New Agenda, set for May 10-11 at Wayne State University in Detroit, features an address by National Labor Relations Board Chairman William Gould III. Contact Prof. Patrick Mason, Department of African Studies, at 313/577-2321.

VIDEO

America Speaks roll-ins from the AFL-CIO special convention have been combined into a 10-minute video with excerpts from the speeches of AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney and Vice President Gore. Contact the AFL-CIO Department of Public Affairs, Broadcast Division, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; or call 202/637-5334.

PUBLICATIONS

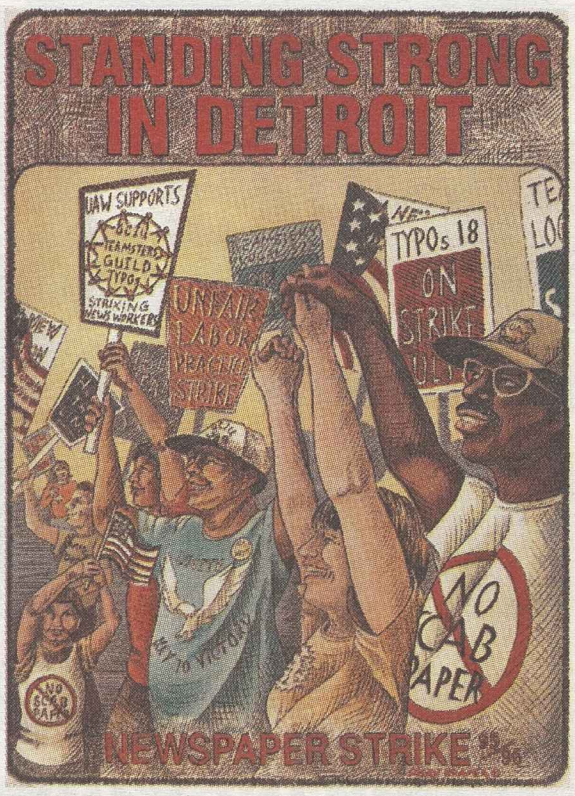
Redesigning Government: The AFSCME Approach to Workplace Change is a new booklet that explores avenues for worker participation — laying the groundwork, putting principles into practice, quality unions and future direction. To order, contact AFSCME, 1625 L St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-5687; or call 202/429-1000.

Labor Looks at Mexico is a 14-page brochure with interviews of union members, leaders and staff who observed the national elections in Mexico. Contact the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, 1390 Market St., Suite 1188, San Francisco, Calif. 94102-5305; or call 415/575-1740.

Software and Hardhats: Technology and Workers in the 21st Century is a report of two AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department conferences on technology. Copies are $14.50 each. Contact the Work and Technology Institute, 1775 K St. N.W., Suite 630, Washington, D.C. 20006; or call 202/833-1303.

The AFL-CIO Guide to Union-Sponsored Scholarships, Awards and Student Financial Aid has information on scholarships sponsored by national and international unions, state federations and central labor councils, federal and state student financial aid information and a bibliography and directory for financial planning. Contact the AFL-CIO Department of Education, 815 16th St. N.W., Room 407, Washington, D.C. 20006.

The Workplace Topics **Leadership in Trade Unions** includes papers on union leadership development, mentoring for union women, leadership effectiveness of local union presidents and participation in decision making. Contact the AFL-CIO Department of Public Policy, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.



Striking Detroit newspaper workers are offering an official strike poster designed by Susan Kramer, a striking member of the Communications Workers. The posters cost $15 unsigned and $25 signed and are available from The Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions Speakers Bureau, 150 Michigan Ave., Detroit 48226. All proceeds go to the adopt-a-family fund. **See story, Page 16.**

Workers will Stand for Children

The working men and women of the AFL-CIO will stand with their children June 1, joining with the members of more than 1,000 community, religious, education, civil rights and other organizations at the Lincoln Memorial for Stand For Children Day.

The event, organized by the Children's Defense Fund, will be a day of family and community renewal, celebration and commitment to children's health, safety, school readiness, education and future, CDF President Marian Wright Edelman said.

It will not be a partisan day and no politicians will be invited to speak, she added.

"As tough as times are and as hard as families are struggling for children, each and every one of us can do better. It's time to hold ourselves to a higher standard in our homes, in our communities and in our government at all levels," Edelman said.

The decline in wages and the growing economic insecurity of families who are working hard every day to support their children is directly tied to the assault on health, child care and economic supports for working families, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

Condemning proposals to raise taxes on low-income families while giving tax breaks to the wealthy, Sweeney said, "Family economic and health security is central to child well-being."

The CDF's "State of America's Children Yearbook 1996" noted that "every day, 2,660 American children are born into poverty and 27 die from poverty; every day, 8,493 children of all races and classes are reported abused or neglected, and three die from abuse every day; every day, 15 children die from guns; every day, 2,833 children drop out of school, 2,700 get pregnant and 790 are born at low birth weights."

The report also points out that the United States ranks first in the world in military technology, military exports, Gross Domestic Product, defense expenditures and the number of millionaires and billionaires among industrialized nations.

At the same time, however, this nation ranks first in the number of children killed by gunfire in industrialized nations, only seventh in science achievement, 12th in math achievement and 18th in infant mortality. It has five times the rate of teen births recorded in western European nations.

Stand For Children Day will be a day for all Americans "to transcend our differences and affirm what unites us a people: a loving desire to raise moral, healthy and educated children, a sense of fairness and a belief that in the richest and most powerful nation on Earth, no child should be left behind," Edelman said.

— Mike Hall

NEWSMAKERS

Donald E. Wightman, president of the Utility Workers, appointed **Joanne F. Goldstein** of Boston as general counsel for the union. Goldstein has been involved in labor law for 22 years and has represented many local unions whose members work in the electric, gas and water industries throughout the Northeast.

Eileen Goldsmith, 28, was named communications director for the Mine Workers. Prior to joining the UMWA in 1995, she served as a press secretary for Rep. Les AuCoin (D-Ore.).

Rudy Oswald, director of the AFL-CIO Economic Research Department, will retire on April 30. Oswald joined the labor movement in 1958 and worked for the Fire Fighters and Service Employees before joining the federation staff. He will serve as economist-in-residence at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies.

Bob Gabor, the founder and editor of Interco Press, the AFL-CIO in-house worldwide news feature service, retired on April 15. Interco Press sent pro-union and pro-democracy opinion pieces and editorials to more than 300 media outlets in 14 languages. Gabor has worked with the AFL-CIO's International Department since 1948 and was a senior policy adviser to the Free Trade Union Institute from 1989 to 1994.

AWARDS

David Schlein, national vice president of AFGE, **Roscoe Ridley**, president of AFGE Council 211, **James Allen**, vice president of Transit Local 689 and AFGE Local 32 were honored as labor and government officials celebrated the 100th anniversary of the metropolitan Washington labor movement. **Joslyn N. Williams**, president of the Metropolitan Washington AFL-CIO, also was recognized for his 15 years of service.

The Cesar E. Chavez Foundation honored four persons who share the late Farm Workers leader's commitment to creating social change through nonviolence. The honorees include former **U.S. Rep. Edward R. Roybal**, human rights activist **Gloria Steinem**, actor **Edward James Olmos** and **Jack Henning**, executive secretary-treasurer of the California AFL-CIO.

Two unions were recognized for their innovative support of alcohol and drug abuse prevention in the workplace by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention — the **Flight Attendants' Employee Assistance Program** and the **Systems Substance Abuse Treatment Center**, jointly formed by Electronic Workers Local 775, Upper Valley Medical Center and Chrysler Dayton employees.

DEATHS

J.C. Turner, 79, president emeritus of the Operating Engineers and past vice president of the AFL-CIO, died in Miami after a series of strokes.

The son of an iron worker, Turner joined the Operating Engineers in 1934. He organized workers in North Carolina and later worked to organize construction workers with the Tennessee Valley Authority. He became the business manager for IUOE Local 77 in 1950 and moved up through the ranks before heading the union from 1975-1985. He was president of the Greater Washington Area AFL-CIO from 1958 to 1972.

Turner was a U.S. delegate to the annual conferences of the International Labor Organization in Geneva during the 1950s and 1960s. He also served as President Carter's special representative to Peru and undertook missions for the AFL-CIO in Europe, Latin America and the Far and Middle East.

Turner also was influential in civic life in Washington, fighting for racial integration in both the city and in trade unions.

F. Nordhoff Hoffmann, 86, a former legislative director for the Steelworkers, died of congestive heart failure. He was 86.

In 1948, USWA President Philip Murray asked Hoffmann to organize the union's legislative office in Washington, D.C. He was appointed chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee in 1967 and served until 1976 when he was named sergeant-at-arms, a post he held until the Republicans gained control of the Senate in 1981.

Louis Sherman, 83, a retired labor lawyer, died from Parkinson's disease.

Sherman began a 30-year career in labor law in 1947, and became general counsel of the Electrical Workers and of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department. In 1956, he established his own labor law firm, which became Sherman, Dunn, Cohen, Leifer & Yellig.



Photos by Daymon J. Hartley/Detroit Sunday Journal

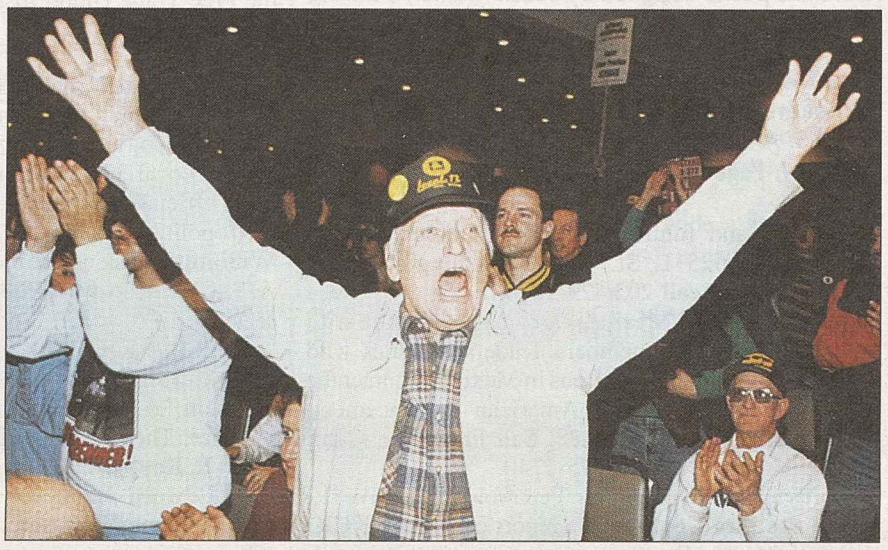
Leading a march from an April 14 rally at Cobo Center to the Detroit News and Free Press buildings were Detroit AFL-CIO President Edgar Scribner, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, Teamsters President Ron Carey, GCIU Secretary-Treasurer Guy DeVito and Newspaper Guild President Linda K. Foley.

Solidarity rules in Detroit rally

By James B. Parks

Workers and their unions delivered a message of solidarity and determination to the giant publishers of the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News at a mass rally April 14.

"Did Knight-Ridder and Gannett think they could crush working families, destroy our lives and careers and no one would protest?" AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney asked a crowd of 3,000 people at Detroit's Cobo Center, where top union leaders came from around the country to challenge the publishers.



Enthusiasm ran high at rally for Detroit News and Free Press strikers.

"We will be with you until Detroit is once again a city where hard work is fairly rewarded and justice is done," Sweeney declared. Union negotiators have put some "fair, flexible proposals on the table," he said. "Now it's time for management to do its job. The ball is in their court."

Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka praised the strikers and their community supporters for staying the course despite repeated attacks by Knight-Ridder and Gannett. "Readers are finding other things to read. Advertisers are finding other places to advertise. The community is revolted and disgusted," Trumka said. "It's Detroit. It's 1996. It's spring. We're still here. And we're going to stay here until we win."

"I'm proud of what I've seen here today," Teamsters President Ron Carey told the rally. "This strike is about good jobs. It's about decent health care. It's about secure pensions. It's about the great American dream."

Also participating in the rally were Service Employees President Richard W. Cordtz, UAW Vice President Carolyn Forrest, Graphic Communications Secretary-Treasurer Guy DeVito, Newspaper Guild President Linda K. Foley, Michigan AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Bertha L. Poe, Detroit AFL-CIO President Edgar A. Scribner, Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich.) and Detroit City Council President Mary Mahaffey.

Meanwhile, the strikers' campaign against the Gannett-owned News and Knight-Ridder's Free Press is gaining momentum. Hearings began April 15 before the National Labor Relations Board on unfair labor practices complaints against the newspapers for failing to bargain in good faith and threatening to replace workers involved in an unfair labor practices strike.

At the same time, circulation and advertising continue to drop. Some 700,000 Detroit-area readers have dropped the Sunday editions of the two papers since the strike began, according to an independent audit by Houston-based International Demographics.

The employees of the News and Free Press have been on strike since July 13 after negotiations failed to produce a new agreement. Management and imported scabs from other papers are producing the newspapers. Hired union-busting security goons from Vance and Huffmaster are delivering the papers.

Last month, Sweeney asked federation affiliates to support a "do not buy, do not advertise" campaign against USA TODAY, the flagship of Gannett Publishing.

"I hope you will consider asking your employers not to patronize USA TODAY until the strike is settled, and ask them to tell Gannett why they are taking the action," Sweeney said in a letter to union presidents. United Airlines already has pulled its ads from the national newspaper.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council, through its Strategic Approaches Committee, is coordinating a program of support for the striking workers that includes the campaigns against the leading papers of the parent companies in the dispute.

The federation's campaign against Knight-Ridder's flagship, The Miami Herald, includes a letter to more than 90,000 South Florida union members urging them to cancel their subscriptions. Striking workers from Detroit are in Miami to phone union members and remind subscribers that they are paying for the company's refusal to bargain in Detroit since Knight-Ridder has cut back on the service and quality of the Herald to cover losses caused by the strike.

Sweeney also urged unions to aid the strikers by participating in the "Adopt-A-Family" program administered by the AFL-CIO Community Services Department and by subscribing to the striker-produced paper, the Sunday Journal.

Contributions to the striker relief fund should be mailed to: DNA Strike Relief Fund, Detroit Metropolitan AFL-CIO, 2550 West Grand Blvd., Detroit, Mich. 48208. Unions and individuals wishing to advertise in the Sunday Journal should contact William Brown, publisher, at 3100 East Jefferson, Detroit Mich. 48207; phone: 313/567-9818.

Meanwhile, the community continues to stand behind the strikers. The UAW wrapped up a three-day national bargaining convention with an April 3 parade from the convention hall to The Detroit News for a rally to support striking newspaper workers.

"As long as you last, we'll be standing next to you in solidarity," UAW President Stephen P. Yokich told about 3,000 chanting demonstrators massed in front of the News building.

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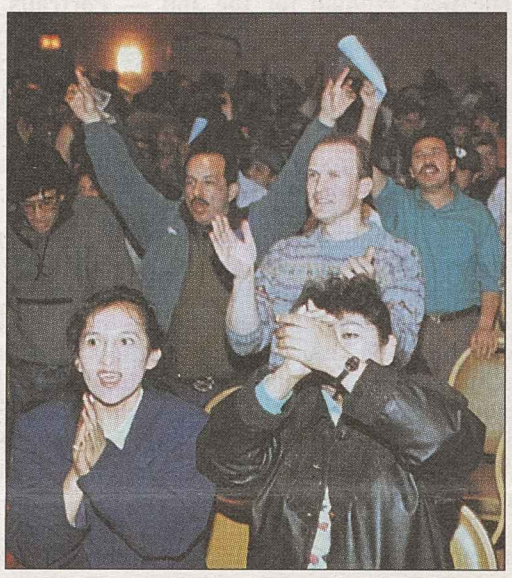
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Jack Miller/Miller Photography

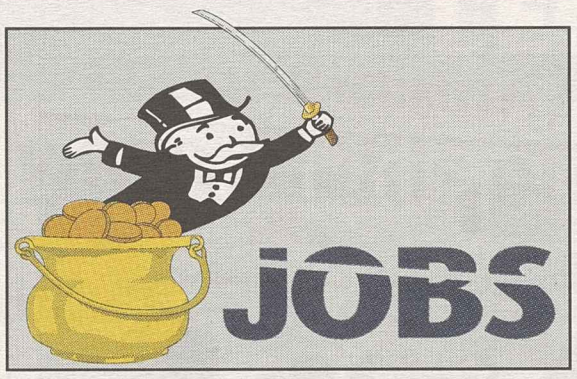
Laborers celebrate industrywide organizing victory for asbestos workers, as unions try new strategies to bring in new members. **See stories, Pages 1 and 2.**

UNION YES

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Corporate executives are rewarded for slashing jobs. **See story, Page 10.**

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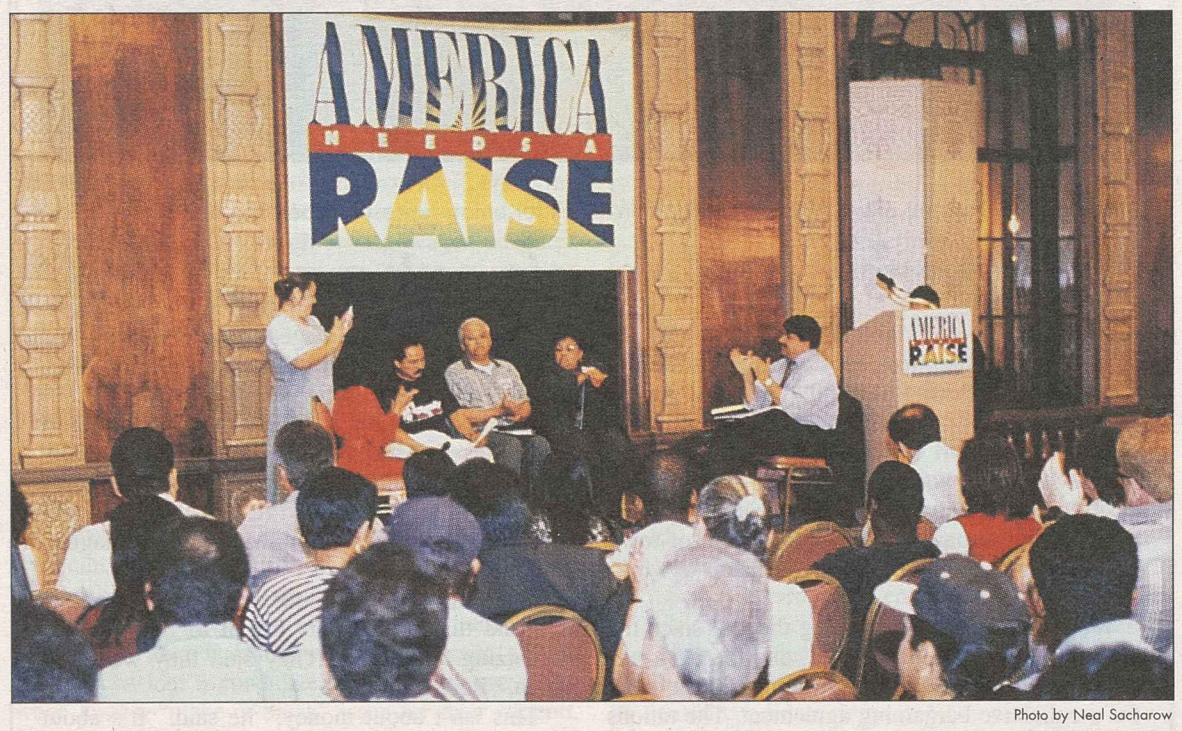


Photo by Neal Sacharow

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Vice President Sumi Haru of the Screen Actors Guild applaud a Los Angeles janitor, who explained how he works three jobs and still has problems making ends meet.

Workers struggle to keep up

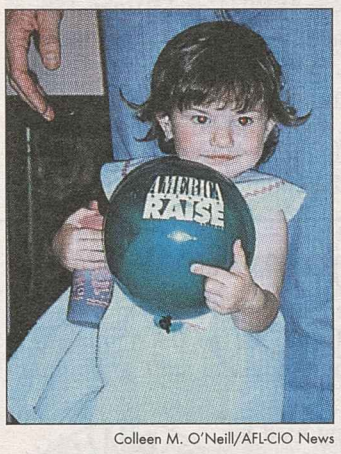
By Colleen M. O'Neill and Sharolyn A. Rosier

After a few opening-night jitters, the AFL-CIO's "America Needs A Raise" campaign hit full stride in moments, as workers from every background offered powerful testimony in town hall meetings in Birmingham, Ala., Los Angeles and Columbus, Ohio.

The tone was set in Birmingham by Nathaniel "Jackie" Jackson II, who said his business degree from Tuskeegee Institute and 20 years' experience as a salesman have not prevented him from struggling in America in the 1990s.

"In 1990, I lost my job, my house, the custody suit in which I was fighting on behalf of my two boys — and in 1992, I lost my dad. I tried to make it for a year, but I didn't have any luck, so I came back to Birmingham in 1993," he told a crowd of more than 400 in the Fairfield Civic Center at the first stop on the campaign trail.

"Now it's 1996. I've worked as a doorman, a sub and now I'm working two and three jobs trying to make a living for myself," Jackson said. "What happens is people are more concerned with filling their pockets rather than taking care of others."



Colleen M. O'Neill/AFL-CIO News

The Birmingham town hall meeting was a family affair.

Jackson and more than 20 other Alabama workers told their stories on April 26, as AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer William F. Lucy listened.

"My benefits are going downhill, and I haven't had a raise in five years," said Robert E. Philpott, an Amalgamated Transit Union member with 17 years on the job at Metro Area Express. "I'd

Continued on Page 5

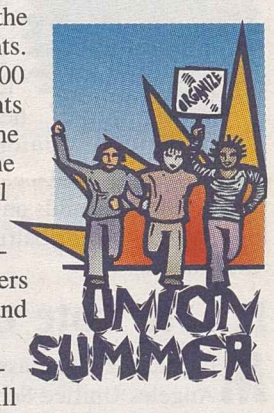
AFL-CIO opens new chapter in organizing

Campaign to spur new generation of activists

By Muriel H. Cooper

Calling it an "historic and unprecedented effort," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney on May 1 kicked off the federation's summer youth movement by announcing the first 18 sites for Union Summer.

The campaign was inspired by the 1964 Freedom Summer movement, which mobilized thousands of young people from across the nation to fight for civil rights. Union Summer will send 1,000 workers and college students into communities around the nation to rally support for the 1990s extension of civil rights — workplace rights and social justice for hundreds of thousands of workers who face a bitter Congress and hostile employers.



The first cities to host Union Summer campaigns will be Akron, Ohio; Atlanta; Boston; Charleston, S.C.; Chicago; Denver; Detroit; Washington; Los Angeles; Miami; New Orleans; Oakland; Sacramento, Calif.; St. Louis; San Diego; San Jose, Calif.; Seattle; and Watsonville, Calif. More sites may be added during the summer.

The federation announced two unique wrinkles to the campaign — a bus tour through the Deep South to register voters and support ongoing organizing campaigns, and a "Labor-to-Neighbor" drive in San Diego to educate and organize rank-and-file members.

"At the same time these young activists are advancing workers' rights, they will learn firsthand that the labor movement is at the heart of the struggle for fairness and justice in America," Sweeney said.

Response to the project, first announced during the

Continued on Page 12

Progress but still too many deaths 25 years after OSHA

By Mike Hall

Shirley Smith struggled at the podium to get through her story about a job that crippled her and a company that fired her when the injury robbed her of the ability to perform the job.

"I was one of the fastest workers, and then my hands started going numb. They told me to go back to work or I would be fired," the single mother of four from Siler City, N.C., told a crowd of 400 at the Labor Department April 26.

The crowd, including AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, Vice President Gore and Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, listened intently as Smith, who was forced to pause several times to wipe away her tears and catch her breath, recounted her story.

She was one of more than two dozen seriously injured workers and relatives of those killed on the job attending a special ceremony marking Worker's Memorial Day and the 25th anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Significant progress has been made since OSHA was enacted into law in 1971, but far too many workers like Smith still are crippled and killed on the job, according to a new AFL-CIO report on a quarter century of OSHA, "Promises Kept, Promises Broken."

Smith's job at the poultry plant required her to cut through breast meat to the bone, break and remove the breastbone with her hands and feed the meat into a skinning machine — hour after hour with dull knives. It is the growing number of jobs like this that make repetitive stress injuries "the most significant safety and health" problem in the workplace today, the federation's report found.

When Smith complained about the pain, the company nurse gave her pills and sent her back to work.

"My hands got numb and cold . . . they fired me from my job," she said. "This carpal tunnel is real, people, it's real," she said tearfully. As she left the

Continued on Page 4



Marianne Keffer Zweig/Page One Photography

Shirley Smith, a poultry worker stricken with carpal tunnel syndrome, hugs AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney as Vice President Gore joins in.

ORGANIZING

'Casual' workers go HERE

In the midst of a bitter labor dispute, Yale University "casual" workers voted for representation by Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 35.

"This is an extraordinary thing — workers voting to join a union two days after we are coming off of a strike," said Bob Proto, Local 35 president.

"But casual workers have been getting a raw deal from Yale for a long time," he said. "They've been strung along with the promise of a real job, but remained 'permanent temps,' with no way to move into the regular work force."

Local 35 and its sister Local 34 conducted separate four-week strikes, pooling resources to support each out-of-work unit.

Both strikes were authorized by the union's combined 3,700 members as a result of the university's failure to negotiate in good faith on several issues, including subcontracting work, job security and wages.

UMWA gains city workers

Using rank-and-file members, the Mine Workers successfully organized city workers in Gallup, N.M.

The workers voted 162-9 for UMWA representation.

"No one can explain to a nonunion worker the value of UMWA representation better than a UMWA member," said Cecil Roberts, president of the union.

Workers at Pittsburg & Midway Coal Co.'s McKinley mine in the Navajo Nation helped build support for the union among the Gallup city workers.

"This victory builds on our effort to represent working families in the coalfields, not only coal miners," said Roberts.

L.A. to vote on IBT

More than 2,800 classified supervisors in the Los Angeles Unified School District won the right to a union vote under an agreement signed between the Teamsters and the LAUSD administration.

The IBT was certified by the Public Employees Relations Board after a majority of workers — including bus supervisors, plant managers, senior administrative assistants and cafeteria supervisors — signed authorization cards.

"At a time when the school district is in crisis, classified supervisors are the only LAUSD employees without union representation," said IBT President Ron Carey.

The workers are concerned about possible contracting out of services and the breakup of the LAUSD. Ballots will be mailed out to workers on May 24 and counted on June 21.



HERE photo

Workers picket in front of the Admiral riverboat in a call for union representation.

Workers calling riverboat's bluff

By Muriel H. Cooper

Employees of the President Casino on the Admiral riverboat aren't bluffing. They want union recognition, and plans are under way to shift the odds in their favor.

The St. Louis workers are urging all unionists, casino customers and community groups to join in a citywide campaign to boycott the out-of-town gaming company that is folding the hands of working families.

Workers have been picketing the site since the boycott was launched April 11, and the St. Louis and Missouri AFL-CIOs have joined in their bid for a collective bargaining agreement. The unions also are planning a series of billboard and radio ads.

"The casino has left us no alternative," said Don Rudd, president of Service Employees Local 50. "At some point, we have to decide to stop talking and get their attention in another way."

Last year, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 74 and SEIU Local 50 joined forces to organize the boat's food and beverage workers, change attendants, housekeeping workers, retail clerks, cage staff and count-room workers.

The unions lost the October election, but the National Labor Relations Board has refused to certify it because the company fired four workers and threatened to cut wages if the workers voted for the union, said Ken Ilg, an organizer for HERE. A NLRB hearing is scheduled this month.

Since the election, a dramatic change of heart has occurred. Most of the employees are single-parent women who are trying to raise their families with a sense of dignity and responsibility. Nearly 75 percent of some 400 workers have signed authorization cards.

"After listening to months and months of promises and threats, workers began to listen to the organizing committee. They said they wanted a union," Ilg said.

"This isn't about money," he said. "It's about respect, seniority and establishing a grievance procedure. Right now, the employer's handbook says that, at the will of the employer, they can be terminated without reason."

"This company simply refuses to recognize the wishes of the clear majority of its employees to be represented by a union," said Tim Luebbert, Local 74 president.

According to industry publications, the cash intake on board riverboat casinos was $63 billion in 1994, a splashing 135 percent increase over 1993. Out of the 60 boats that travel the Midwest, only three are unionized.

News staff joins UAW

Newsroom employees at the Advocate in Stamford, Conn., voted 20-12 to join the UAW, making it the first daily newspaper editorial staff to be represented by the union.

"We were all pushing hard for the union because we wanted a say in everything that affected us as workers — our salaries, benefits and workplace rules," said Dan Mangan, an Advocate reporter. "We were tired of being treated arbitrarily and unilaterally." The UAW will represent reporters, photographers and some editors at the 30,000-circulation paper.

Although the Advocate employees have been spared layoffs so far, the paper's owner — Times Mirror — has dramatically downsized, especially at the flagship Los Angeles Times.

News employees at the Advocate have voiced concerns that vacant positions go unfilled, salaries are too low and health insurance benefits are eroding.

All-news all union

Broadcasters at Detroit's all-news radio station, WWJ-AM voted to be represented by the Television and Radio Artists.

WWJ is the 27th CBS/Westinghouse-owned radio station represented by AFTRA.

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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BCTD builds on grass roots

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Union-building and political action at the grass roots were the focus of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department legislative conference.

Breaking from the past, one-half of the conference was dedicated to workshops. The issues ran the gamut — from organizing and safety and health to prevailing wage laws, the information superhighway and political organizing.

In a workshop called "Full-Throttle Organizing: A Case Study of Advanced Organizing Methods," Jim Rudicil, organizing director of the Electrical Workers, outlined techniques Local 611 in Albuquerque, N.M., has used to gain the support of union contractors and for union apprenticeship programs over the past eight years.

An essential part of the equation, Rudicil told the audience, is for the union to transform itself, changing the culture to make growth a first priority.

Another workshop on prevailing wages educated union leaders on how they can "save the bacon." Several state legislatures have tried to turn back prevailing wage laws, including in California, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. Union leaders from each of these states presented the strategies they used to thwart the predominantly GOP efforts.

In the face of these Republican attacks, the role of unions has become clear to the membership as well as the leadership. "We have a moment of opportunity this year," said BCTD President Robert A. Georgine. "We can regain the House and retain the White House if we tap into the power of our membership."

Pointing to a recent survey of building trades union members by Peter D. Hart Associates, Georgine said 80 percent consider a candidate's position on prevailing wage laws a "make-or-break" issue for their support. Seventy percent felt they would be better off personally if more members of their craft were organized.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, who outlined the federation's "America Needs a Raise" campaign, declared that unions are changing the way they deal with politics.

"The AFL-CIO will demand candidates who run with labor support wear it on the outside of their lapel, rather than on the inside of their pockets," he said. "Candidates will be judged by where they stand on working family issues."

There is no doubt where the "Gingrich-Dole Congress" stands, Vice President Gore told delegates. "They have launched an all-out assault on decades of progress on behalf of working people. But they are out of step with American values and they will not prevail. America's working families and those of you who defend working families are here to stay."

To resounding applause and a standing ovation, Gore pledged a veto by President Clinton of any bill to repeal the Davis-Bacon or Service Contract acts.

Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich reminded delegates that the attack is on two fronts — legislation and cuts in appropriations. Listing several cutbacks in enforcement and oversight programs, including safety and health, Reich said weakening enforcement is just another route to repeal.

Kentucky will not stand by and allow Congress or the state legislature to erode workers' wages, Gov. Paul Patton (D) told the delegates. "The road to improve workers' standard of living is to improve their wages and benefits. That is why I would not allow a repeal of the prevailing wage law in my state."

Delegates also took an afternoon to take the information they heard in speeches and learned in workshops directly to their members of Congress. The BCTD even videotaped some of the visits should the members get amnesia after the elections.

Other speakers included Senate Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.), Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.) and Whip David A. Bonior (D-Mich.), as well as Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver, Steve Protulis of the National Council of Senior Citizens and Charles J. Hynes of the District Attorneys of America.

UAW challenges Hill on workers' issues

More than 1,600 members of the UAW flocked to Capitol Hill after their annual political action conference to lobby representatives on the union's top legislative priorities — saving the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, raising the minimum wage and defeating the so-called TEAM Act.

Hans Kliphaus, president of UAW Local 2151 in Coopersville, Mich., planned to take the case against the TEAM Act, which would legalize company unions, to one of its strongest proponents, Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.).

The prototype of a firm that implemented the provisions of the TEAM Act in Hoekstra's district is Donnelly Mirrors, Kliphaus said. "And there's an organizing drive in their Grand Haven plant because the workers are unhappy, and not happy with Donnelly picking their leaders."

Jeff Faux, president of the Economic Policy Institute, told the conference that it would be an economic "disaster" if the Republicans gained control of the White House along with both houses of Congress. The last time that occurred was in 1929-30, the first year of the Great Depression, he said.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) gave delegates an example of what workers could expect if Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.), the presumptive Republican presidential candidate, wins in November.

He held up a letter from Sen. Lauch Faircloth (R-N.C.) to the virulently anti-worker National Right to Work Committee, in which he said Dole "committed the Senate to a vote on the national right-to-work bill" he introduced.

Other speakers included First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) and House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.).

Bipartisan health care bill in jeopardy

In a rare 100-0 vote, the Senate approved a health insurance reform bill backed by the AFL-CIO that would make it easier for workers who change or lose jobs to keep their health benefits.

But partisan warfare could derail the bill. Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) plans to join House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) to load up the bill in conference with provisions rejected by the bill's bipartisan cosponsors, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.), and later voted down by a majority of the Senate.

These provisions include so-called Medical Savings Accounts, which would mostly benefit upper-income people, and limits on medical malpractice suits supported by physicians and the medical community.

Along with the portability of workers' insurance from job to job, the bill would allow workers to maintain their insurance if they lose their jobs or become self-employed, if they pay the premium.

It also would sharply limit exclusions of workers and their dependents because of pre-existing medical conditions. The bill allows self-employed workers to deduct up to 80 percent of their insurance costs and makes long-term health care costs deductible.

The Senate bill also includes coverage for mental illness as well as physical problems, but that provision may be dropped in conference.

Backers of the bill agreed it was modest in scope and does not solve all of the nation's many health care problems. But it was this more narrow approach to reform that allowed groups from labor to business to the health care community to support the bill.

Kennedy noted that the legislation "will end many of the most serious health insurance abuses and provide greater protections to millions of families."

The bill "does provide some peace of mind for those who desperately want to have some assurance that they will not be excluded from coverage because of pre-existing medical conditions, or if they lose their job or change their job," Kassebaum said.

— Mike Hall

CAPITOL DIGEST

Seven months behind schedule because of Republican efforts to force through unacceptable cuts, the final piece of the fiscal year 1996 budget was passed and signed into law April 26.

In the final measure, education programs and Occupational Safety and Health Administration enforcement efforts received increased funding over vetoed GOP levels, while legislative riders hamstringing OSHA, the National Labor Relations Board and environmental enforcement were lifted.

The omnibus spending bill covers funding for the five appropriations bills Congress and the White House had been unable to reach agreement on: Labor/Health and Human Services, Commerce/Justice/State, Veterans Administration/Housing and Urban Development, Interior and the District of Columbia.

President Clinton said the deal does cut the deficit, but also "reflects our values by preserving our commitment to education, to the preservation of the environment and to health care."

Overall, the bill restores some $5.1 billion for education, training, National Service and other key programs.

In the Labor/HHS/Education portion of the bill, the agreement adds $3.1 billion over the rejected Republican plan. Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich said, "We're holding our own in this bill. . . . The president's support ensured the reductions were far less drastic than the cuts first proposed last year."

An extra $5 million was added for OSHA's enforcement of workplace safety laws. The original House bill called for a $41 million cut for the safety agency, with enforcement hit the hardest. This bill reduces funding overall for OSHA by $6.7 million, or 7 percent, from 1995 levels.

In addition, the ban on OSHA's research for an ergonomics standard was lifted.

NLRB funding was reduced by 3 percent instead of the 30 percent first proposed by the House. Also left out from the first measure to the final measure was the limiting of the NLRB's use of a certain type of injunction. The AFL-CIO won a victory with the dropping of a provision that would have blocked the enforcement of NLRB decisions relating to "salting," or the hiring of union workers in nonunion workplaces.

In education, $195 million was added to Goals 2000. Some $953 millon also was added to Title I, Education for the Disadvantaged.

There is no breathing room for lawmakers, as their attention now must turn to the 1997 budget, due by Oct. 1, the start of the new fiscal year.

Elsewhere on Capitol Hill:

REG "REFORM" — Such worker safeguards as OSHA protections, the Fair Labor Standards Act, Davis-Bacon and basic collective bargaining rights like Section 13(c) transit worker protections could be jeopardized by a measure approved by the House Government Reform Committee April 24.

H.R. 2086, the Local Empowerment and Flexibility Act, "goes far beyond providing local flexibility" in the use of federal grant money by local governments, AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor said.

Along with allowing the waiver of laws and regulations, the bill also would create a board that could act in secret to eliminate or waive any regulations, including those dealing with constitutional and civil rights that could not be waived under the bill's rules on flexibility plans. The bill may come to the House floor in early May.

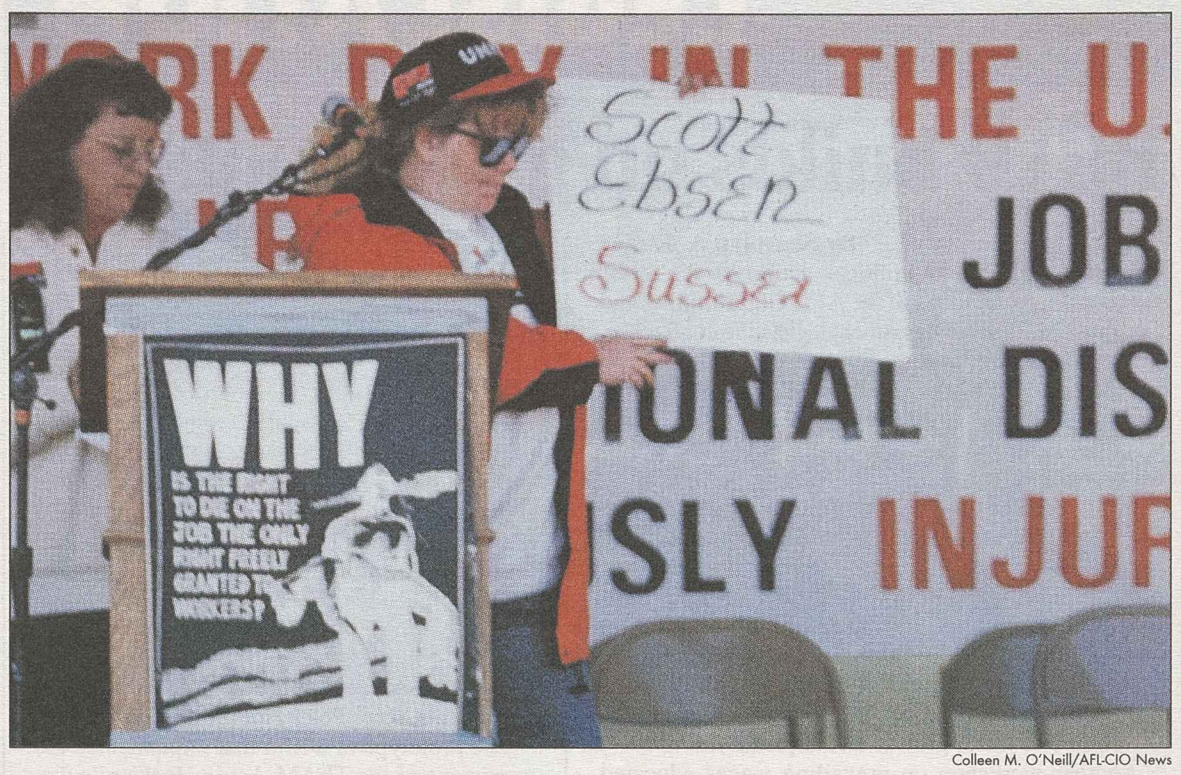
SWEATSHOPS — Legislation aimed at shutting down a growing sweatshop industry is expected to be introduced this month by Rep. Bill Clay (D-Mo.).

One of the key provisions in the bill would make both the manufacturer and the contractor in the garment industry liable for violations of the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, child labor laws and other regulations.

"A campaign to eliminate sweatshops is and will be at the top of the agenda of not only the unions directly affected by sweatshops, including UNITE, but by the AFL-CIO and a broad coalition of religious, civic, consumer, civil rights and women's organizations," said Evelyn Dubrow, UNITE vice president and legislative director, in a letter to House members.

—Mike Hall

Unions renew vow to fight for safe jobs



Colleen M. O'Neill/AFL-CIO News

Madison, Wis., unionists carry signs to commemorate fellow workers killed during the past year.

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Workers across the nation marked the 8th annual Workers Memorial Day with solemn ceremonies, rousing remarks and a pledge to renew the fight for safe jobs.

From rallies to memorial services — and even a candlelight vigil at the United Nations building, with candles lit in 70 other nations — workers at more than 200 events in 37 states paused to remember fallen colleagues. AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson attended memorials in St. Louis and in Alton, Ill., and Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka addressed the annual Workers Memorial Day breakfast in Los Angeles.

Wisconsin welcomed AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney to events in Milwaukee and Madison. At the Postal Workers hall in Milwaukee, more than 300 workers and their families jammed the room.

Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.) was saluted when he became the first Wisconsin legislator to sign the AFL-CIO's pledge to fight for safe jobs. Rep. Gerald Kleczka (D-Wis.) signed the pledge shortly thereafter.

"It's clear we have to keep OSHA on the books and we have to make it better," Feingold told the workers. "Make no mistake — I will oppose any attempt to cripple OSHA and lessen protections for workers. I will oppose attempts to make the workplace of the 21st century resemble the workplace of the 19th century."

Kleczka added, "I was not elected to add names to this workers' memorial," pledging to keep up the fight on behalf of workers.

Sweeney led participants on a march from the hall to the Wisconsin Workers' Memorial in Carl Zeidler Union Square Park, where injured workers and their families shared their stories.

"You just get used to being compliant; you don't think it could happen to you," said Sean Sciurba, 27, whose legs were crushed last February when scaffolding he was working on collapsed. "I didn't — and it happened to me."

Ardena Nicolaus did think about the dangers her husband faced, and she begged him to do something about it, but he told her he didn't want to rock the boat or cause trouble.

In May 1993, Carl Nicolaus was suffocated when he was buried 18 feet deep while doing sewer construction. Referring to herself as a "construction worker widow," Ardena shared her painful story, she said, so that other deaths might be avoided.

Another family member showed his heartache when discussing his brother-in-law, an Ameritech employee shot to death by a 13-year-old girl as he sat in his truck.

Al Thompson was a good man who loved his children and worked hard, said his brother-in-law, Walter Owens, who decried the violence so prevalent in today's society, and pleaded that now was the time to "do something about it."

Violence in the workplace is an emerging health problem, according to a newly released AFL-CIO study, which noted that homicide is the second-leading cause of workplace fatalities.

"Today is a day to ask why — why, when technology gives us the means to make our lives safer, are millions of workers still exposed to deadly asbestos fibers, gritty silica particles and toxic chemical fumes that make them sick and sometimes kill them?" Sweeney asked.

"Why are workers in nursing homes, public schools, fast-food restaurants and office buildings joining their brothers and sisters who work on high-rise construction sites and in underground coal mines to swell the ranks of those who are killed or injured on the job?

"Why do we tolerate thousands of workers each year being crippled by injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome, and by diseases like black lung?" he asked.

Sweeney recalled the stories of five of the 116 Wisconsin workers who lost their lives last year, and said of them, "They didn't have to die."

He urged the crowd to recommit to the struggle for job safety and health, and promised, "We will fight like hell to keep the promise of safe jobs alive. It is, after all, the fight of our lives."

In Milwaukee, unionists took turns reading the names of the 1995 worker fatalities, while Madison workers followed up that reading by placing placards at the foot of the memorial sea of crosses at the Labor Temple.

At both events, Wisconsin AFL-CIO President David Newby lauded the workers' efforts in killing H.R. 1834, OSHA-gutting legislation put forth by Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.), even ceremoniously ripping up a copy of the bill.

Self-described "labor hell-raiser" Anne Feeney entertained the crowds with "It's a War on the Workers" and "We Just Come to Work Here (We Don't Come to Die)."

Gore: 'We won't let OSHA's 25th anniversary be its last'

Continued from Page 1

podium, Gore took her in his arms and hugged her.

Sweeney pointed out that Smith and the other workers at the ceremony are "like too many working people across our nation . . . their lives turned upside down by jobs that are unsafe. Some have lost the use of limbs; many have lost jobs and income."

Plumber James Druiett is one of those workers. He fell from an unsafe scaffold provided by his employer after being told to do a job he wasn't certified for.

The 20-foot fall, where his head hit a standing eight-inch pipe, left Druiett partially blind, deaf in one ear and "missing a piece of my brain and piece of my skull . . . I've spent seven years healing from injuries that occurred because my employer decided it was easier to break the law than to comply with safety standards."

It's not just the job site that threatens workers, but dangers also lurk in Congress, Sweeney said.

"We've spent the last year-and-a-half fighting a relentless attack by congressional Republicans, at the behest of their corporate allies, who want to weaken the law and take us back in time," he said.

Gore promised the Clinton administration would veto any bill that harmed workers' safety. "We're going to fight for OSHA," he said. "We will not let its 25th anniversary be its last."

Strong job safety laws are needed to ensure that a worker can "go home at the end of the day with his soul intact, his body unharmed and his dignity uncompromised," Gore said.

Reich said deaths and injuries have decreased in the past 25 years and "none of that happened by accident," but because of development and tough enforcement of safety standards. The AFL-CIO report backs that up.

Overall workplace deaths have dropped by 72 percent and the injury rate has fallen 23 percent under OSHA, the report states. "The most significant reductions in workplace fatalities and injuries have been in those sectors which have had the highest level of government enforcement," it said.

In the construction industry, where OSHA has performed nearly half its inspections, the death rate dropped by 78 percent and the injury rate by 40 percent. In mining, overseen by the stricter Mine Safety and Health Act, the fatality rate has dropped by 73 percent and injury rate by 50 percent.

But the report found that in industries not subjected to the same tough scrutiny, such as transportation, trade and agriculture, injury rates "have shown much less improvement."

The number and rate of injuries actually has increased in the service sector — the largest sector of today's economy — and in the finance sector as well.

A staggering number of job-related deaths and injuries still occur annually. In 1994, 6,588 workers were killed by traumatic injuries on the job and an estimated 50,000 died from occupational disease. Those diseases, such as lead poisoning, silicosis and occupational asthma, continue to be significant problems.

More than 6.8 million people were injured in 1994, and those injuries resulted in costs of more than $120 billion and 125 million days of lost work.

The workplace has changed tremendously since the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was formed, and new safety and health problems have emerged. Serious injuries from ergonomic hazards — poor job design and work that forces repetitive motion and overexertion — account for one-third of all workplace injuries today.

Violence in the workplace also has soared. Today, homicide is the second-leading cause of workplace deaths and is the leading cause of work-related deaths among female workers.

In the service sector, which now accounts for 47 percent of all workplace injuries and illnesses, but only 15 percent of OSHA's inspections, nursing home workers have seen injury rates jump 76 percent since 1973. Nursing aides have the highest serious injury rate of any occupation.

Copies of "Promises Kept, Promises Broken" and a state-by-state profile of worker safety and health may be ordered through the AFL-CIO's Support Services Department, 202/637-5041.

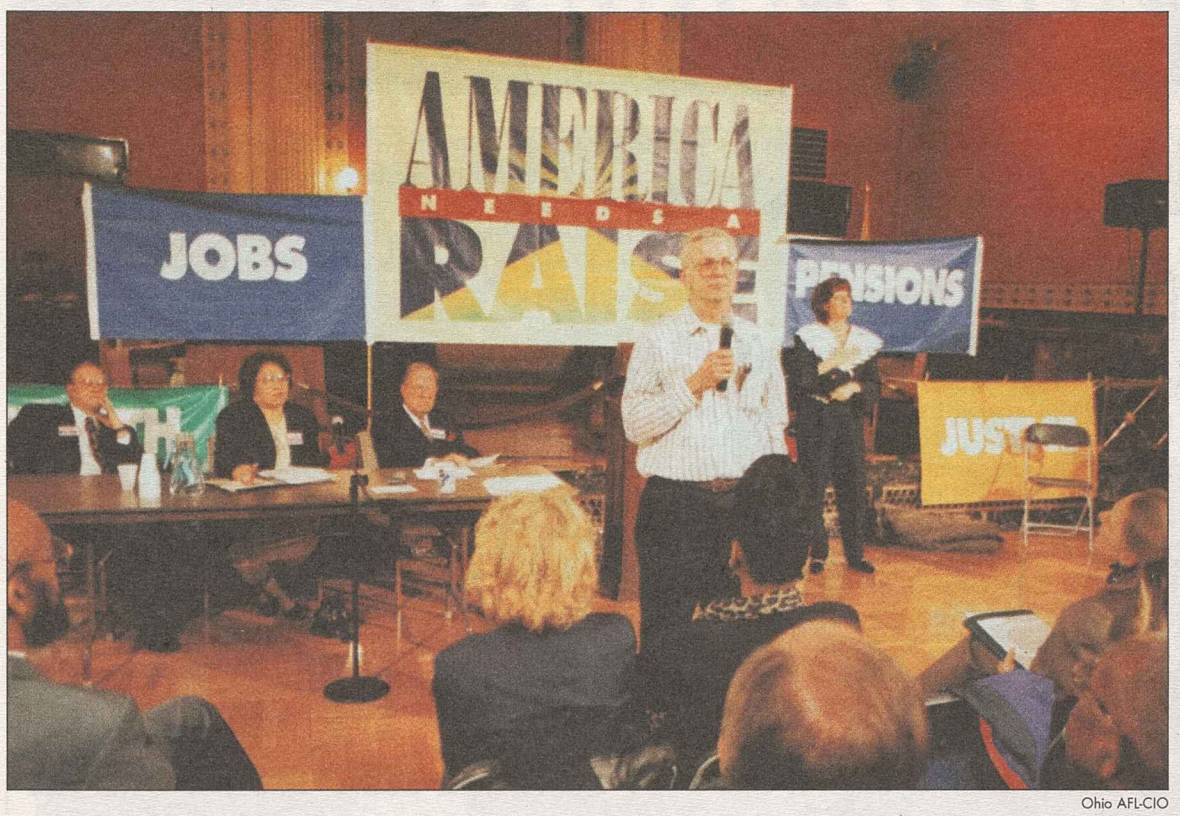
Strikers have healthy Workers Memorial Day

Several international unions found a unique way to commemorate Workers Memorial Day and offer support to striking newspaper workers in Detroit.

The Communications Workers, Graphic Communications Union, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union and Teamsters hosted a health fair April 28 in downtown Detroit for News and Free Press workers, their families and supporters. Participants were able to have performed, free of charge, tests for blood pressure, tuberculosis, glaucoma and visual acuity, lipid profile/glucose and cholesterol levels and pulmonary function.

During the fair, shuttle buses took participants to a rally and Workers Memorial Day program in the suburbs, where the 150 Michigan workers killed on the job in 1995 were remembered.

The program was sponsored by the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO, SEMCOSH, UAW Region 1-A and UAW Local 3000.



Ohio AFL-CIO

Dave Myer worked in middle-level management for Rockwell International and McDonnell-Douglas before they relocated, he told the Columbus, Ohio, town hall meeting, presided over by Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. Now battling age discrimination, Myer can't find much more than $6-an-hour jobs.

Workers tell the economic story

Continued from Page 1

like to call on all workers in America to come together on Election Day to show Congress we don't need a Contract with America, what we need is a fair wage for a day's work."

Jonathan Palmer's mother knows about the struggle for a fair wage. She spent much of her life working two and sometimes three jobs at a time to keep bread on the table and a roof over her children's heads.

His voice breaking, Palmer said, "She worked those long grueling weeks for us to survive. We made it out." But millions of Americans are on the same path, he noted, and he urged everyone to come together and work hard to bring justice and fair wages to all workers.

Other workers then shared their stories, including a nurse who'd had no raise in nine years and an Electrical Worker nearing retirement age who is having difficulty staying fully employed with decent wages.

Two others also riveted the crowd with their stories — men seeking day work standing in the rain that very morning on Birmingham's 14th Street, when Trumka came by and asked them to come to the meeting.

"Lots of people who want to work don't have a skill," said Ben Tyner. "People will not give them an opportunity because of their situation."

"I'm homeless, but I'm not trying to hurt someone, rob them or create problems," said Wayne Bryant. "I was working for $4.25 an hour, but I couldn't pay my bills, buy groceries, gas, pay the electric bill, buy food and take the kids to get clothes or to the hospital.

"I need to make more so I can live a productive and successful life, too. I'm not a criminal — but give me a chance and I can do better," he said, listing his abilities in landscaping, carpentry, roofing and general home repair.

Also addressing the audience were two workers from Florida's Quincy Farms, who have voted in the Farm Workers and are seeking a first contract. They asked for help in boycotting "Prime" label mushrooms.

The campaign then moved to Los Angeles, where Trumka and Screen Actors Guild Vice President Sumi Haru heard continued testimony on the hardships faced by American workers.

James Booker, an African-American who worked 28 years as a tool builder for McDonnell Douglas, explained how he was laid off six months before the company offered early retirement.

"Now my wife, who works in the banking industry, is also facing a layoff in a couple months," Booker said. "I had a pension with the company, but I can't get access to it to take care of my wife and two children."

Workers from Thailand imprisoned in an El Monte, Calif., sweatshop shared their horrible tale at the April 29 meeting.

"We worked there and lived there behind locked doors and barbed wire fences," one worker said. "We worked from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. the next morning without rest. We were only granted one day of rest a month. We made anywhere from $400 to $500 per month with no overtime. This amounts to about 70 cents an hour."

> *"I need to make more so I can live a productive and successful life. I'm not a criminal – but give me a chance and I can do better."*
>
> **— Wayne Bryant, a homeless day laborer in Birmingham, Ala., skilled in landscaping, carpentry, roofing and home repair**

To survive, the workers also had to pay for their own food and work supplies at exorbitant prices, such as $25 for a sewing machine piece that routinely is found for $2 and $12 for scissors that normally retail for $5.

The California workers followed up the meeting with a march and rally at Pershing Square led by Trumka, AFL-CIO Regional Director David Sickler and local union leaders in support of workers at Kaiser Permanente, Southern California Gas, New Otani Hotel and GTE.

The day after the Los Angeles gathering, the campaign moved to Columbus, Ohio, where AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson was ready to hear from workers.

"America does need a raise," said Larry Childrey, who has worked for companies that have been sold or shut down operations entirely. "We need total rethinking by companies who feel they are doing people a favor by paying them $5 to $6 an hour."

Tears fell from Karen Meadows' face as she described her efforts to make ends meet. A college graduate who has worked her way off welfare, Meadows makes $8.89 an hour at her primary job, but has to work a second job to survive. She said she wants her four sons to know that hard work makes a difference, but, she said, "they see me working two jobs and they can't see where it makes a difference. I want better for my sons, but a two-bedroom trailer is all I can afford."

In Atlanta and Columbus, Ga., about 550 union members delivered the message that "America Needs a Raise" to events not sponsored by the AFL-CIO.

At a town hall meeting sponsored by Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.) in Atlanta, Labor Council President Stewart Acuff declared, "The best anti-poverty program in the world is a union card." Other union speakers included Jimmy Hyde (UAW Local 10), Barbara Landay (SEIU Local 1985) and Deborah Lain (Georgia director for UNITE).

In Columbus, unionists also combined the America Needs a Raise message with Workers Memorial Day.

GOP stung by popular support for wage raise

By David Kameras

The fortification that Republicans have erected to block an increase in the federal minimum wage has begun to crumble as the election calendar forces legislators to listen to their constituents' anger.

A New York Times/CBS poll indicates that 84 percent of Americans favor raising the minimum wage.

The AFL-CIO can take a good portion of the credit for pushing the issue to the forefront of public debate with television and radio ads in 30 districts during the Easter/Passover recess. When they returned to Washington, 22 Republicans broke ranks with the House GOP leadership and introduced their own measure to raise the minimum wage.

On April 30, the AFL-CIO launched another series of radio ads in 29 congressional districts asking listeners to call their members of Congress and urge a vote on the issue. The federation has used phone banks to reach more than 200,000 union households in 30 congressional districts to involve and energize workers in keeping the momentum going.

But the congressional leadership seems intent on attaching any manner of killer provisions to the initiative.

One proposal aimed at ducking the growing demand for a minimum wage hike "goes from bad to worse," Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich told the Service Employees at their convention in Chicago. The plan to provide an Earned Income Tax Credit solely on the basis of family status without considering current income would actually raise taxes on single workers and childless adults, he said.

"Their message for up to 4 million working adults near the minimum wage is: 'You don't get a minimum wage increase, you get a tax increase instead.' Let's stop the gimmicks," Reich said. "Let the majority rule and let's raise the minimum wage for hard working Americans now."

"The American people don't want the Republican leadership to load up the minimum wage debate with a bunch of unrelated provisions designed only to complicate its passage and further delay its enactment," Vice President Albert Gore said. "What the American people want — and what hardworking families deserve — is a very simple, up or down, yes or no, no-riders-attached vote."

The growing disparity in wages is particularly hard on women, who comprise 60 percent of minimum wage workers, Gore noted during an April 18 ceremony marking National Pay Inequity Awareness Day. However, thanks to collective bargaining agreements and negotiated settlements in equity lawsuits, organized women have seen $740 million in wage raises since the mid-1980s.

"For women who are fortunate enough to have union representation, the benefits are significant where pay equity is concerned," he said.

In fact, the decline in union membership in recent decades is one of the trends that have "systematically disempowered workers relative to their employers," contributing to stagnating wages, Economic Policy Institute Research Director Larry Mishel said at a Bard College economic conference. "We've had a significant expansion of the pie, so there could have been more of the pie for more people, but we haven't seen that."

With more than five years having elapsed since the last federal minimum wage increase, many labor and civic organizations are making progress in taking up the fight on the state level. Recent developments include:

- In California, the Liveable Wage Coalition claims enough signatures to put on November's ballot an initiative to raise the state's minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.75 in two years.
- In Colorado, labor is rallying opposition to a state Senate bill prohibiting enactment of local minimum wage laws.
- In Connecticut, the House passed a bill raising the state minimum from $4.27 to $5.15 in two steps.
- In New York, the Assembly passed legislation to raise that state's wage from $4.25 to $5.05.

Supreme Court backs Teamsters at Holly Farms

By James B. Parks

In a victory for organized labor, the U.S. Supreme Court narrowly ruled that workers who catch, load and haul chickens for slaughter are covered by the National Labor Relations Act.

The 5-4 decision, announced April 23, affirmed an NLRB ruling that ordered Holly Farms to bargain with the Teamsters, which represents the workers who catch chickens to be sent to slaughter, forklift operators who load the caged chickens onto trucks and drivers who take the chickens to a processing plant.

The case, Holly Farms vs. NLRB, began in December 1988, when the IBT won a representation election at the company, based in Wilkesboro, N.C. Tyson Foods purchased rival Holly Farms in 1989 and said it would merge that company's transportation unit with its own. Tyson offered jobs to the Holly Farms drivers, represented by the IBT, with new pay and working conditions. All but 47 of its 209 drivers accepted.

But Tyson, the nation's largest poultry company, also withdrew recognition of the IBT, prompting a strike and the filing of unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB. The board ruled that Tyson was the successor to Holly Farms and ordered the company to bargain with the union at facilities in Texas, Virginia and North Carolina.

The company appealed, arguing that the IBT members were agricultural workers, which the NLRA specifically exempts from its provisions. The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the NLRB ruling.

In a strike settlement announced in December 1995, the company agreed to reinstate about 100 drivers in "an important first step to ultimately negotiating a contract," said IBT spokesman Chip Roth.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, writing for the majority, said the workers' jobs were tied to Holly Farms' slaughtering and processing operations, activities that do not constitute "farming" under the statute. She noted that the live-haul crews work out of the Wilkesboro processing plant, some three miles from the hatcheries, and punch a time clock at the plant at the beginning and end of each shift.

"Administrators and reviewing courts must take care to assure that exemptions from NLRA coverage are not so expansively interpreted as to deny protection to workers the act was designed to reach," Ginsburg said.

In a partial dissent, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor agreed the drivers were not agricultural workers, but said it defied common sense to claim that the chicken catchers and forklift drivers were not. The NLRA includes "preparation for market" as one of the jobs performed by agricultural workers, O'Connor said, and that should cover the chicken catchers.

Joining Ginsburg in the majority were Justices John Paul Stevens, Anthony Kennedy, David Souter and Stephen Breyer. Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas joined in O'Connor's dissent.

COURTS

NIOSH skins Cat

Federal prosecutors are seeking criminal and civil penalties against Caterpillar and company officials who twice defied a court order to allow inspectors from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health inside the York, Pa., plant.

"It is time for the management of Caterpillar to stop obstructing and delaying the processes that are designed to assure employees of health and safety protections in the company's workplace," said UAW Vice President Richard Shoemaker, head of the union's Caterpillar department.

Two Caterpillar officials, Jeff Cross and Robert Cartwright, could face jail sentences and fines of $10,000 a day until the inspection is allowed. The case is Shalala vs. Cross.

The UAW requested the inspections because of concerns over unusual health problems among workers in the plant's oil cooler department. Among other things, the NIOSH inspectors were interested in checking chemical and toxic metal exposure among workers in the department. In the past, workers have expressed concern over cadmium exposure and a range of work-related health problems.

Gnawing on overtime pay

A Washington janitorial service must pay overtime to workers, even if the records were destroyed by rodents and floods, a federal appeals court ruled.

The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overruled a lower court decision in Arias vs. U.S. Service Industries and ruled that USSI must pay six former employees for overtime worked between 1990 and 1994.

The janitors sued under the Fair Labor Standards Act and the D.C. Minimum Wage Act. Citing a 1946 Supreme Court ruling in Anderson vs. Mount Clemens Pottery, the appeals court said if the employees could produce evidence of overtime work, it was up to the employer to refute the claim.

The janitors argued that USSI failed to compile records of overtime on a weekly basis as required by law, but instead kept records of total hours worked during each shift over a twice-monthly pay period. USSI was unable to produce the relevant records, claiming they had been destroyed by floods and rodents.

Pilgrim held in contempt

A federal appeals court cited Pilgrim Industries for contempt for failing to implement a 1992 NLRB order.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals imposed a $15,000 fine on the Lufkin, Texas, company, with additional prospective fines of $1,500 per day.

Pilgrim unilaterally declared an impasse in negotiations with Food and Commercial Workers Local 40 and implemented its last offer.

After finding Pilgrim had twice unilaterally increased employee health care premiums, the NLRB in 1992 ordered the company to restore its basic health plan. The appeals court in 1992 upheld the NLRB order, but less than two weeks later the company ignored the order and unilaterally increased premiums again. The workers walked out for two days in June 1993 and Pilgrim declared an impasse.

Unions support women at Mitsubishi

Firm pressured workers in sexual harassment case

Organized labor, whose members have long fought discrimination and harassment in the workplace, roundly condemned Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing for trying to intimidate female employees who have filed sexual harassment charges.

The company took the cause to a new level of hostility by threatening the entire work force with the loss of jobs if the charges proceeded and then forcing workers to demonstrate against the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which filed the suit.

"As leaders of a union proud of its decades-old tradition of combating discrimination in the workplace and society, we believe that Mitsubishi's efforts to pressure its employees into demonstrating against the EEOC's efforts to provide all of Mitsubishi's work force with a work environment free of sexual harassment is just plain wrong," UAW President Stephen P. Yokich said.

"We take sexual harassment seriously and we have for a long time," Yokich said. The Mitsubishi employees are represented by UAW Local 2488. Mitsubishi employs about 4,000 people, including about 700 women.

Calling sexual harassment "an illegal violation of human dignity," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said, "It takes courage to challenge unfair and illegal practices in the workplace. We condemn the actions of Mitsubishi management in depriving the women who have brought charges against them of their right to due process free of intimidation.

"Instead of letting the complaint take its course, Mitsubishi is turning worker against worker, raising the threat of major job loss and intimidating the plaintiffs with an investigation of their private lives," he said.

More than 2,500 Mitsubishi employees marched April 22 on the Chicago offices of the EEOC to protest the agency's suit against the automaker. The agency has charged that as many as 400 current or former female employees were sexually harassed at the Normal, Ill., plant. The UAW has charged that the company "pressured" workers to attend the demonstration, noting that Mitsubishi offered workers a day off, free transportation and a free meal. The company also kept lists of workers who did and did not attend the demonstration.

The company also has set up an in-plant phone bank and is pressuring employees to call members of Congress, the EEOC and news organizations during company time to protest the investigation, the UAW said.

"Instead of opposing the EEOC, Mitsubishi would do better to work with the agency and the union to redress past wrongs and make whatever changes are necessary to ensure that its work force is protected from any kind of discrimination now and in the future," Yokich said.

The EEOC filed a class-action suit April 9 in federal court in Peoria, Ill., on behalf of as many as 400 female Mitsubishi employees who alleged they were subjected to sexual innuendo and "unwarranted grabbing, groping and touching." Some of the women allege that male workers exposed themselves, drew sexually explicit pictures and made sexual advances.

Mitsubishi responded by telling its workers, some of whom make $100,000 a year with overtime, that adverse publicity from the suit could reduce car sales and threaten their jobs. Then the company organized the phone banks and demonstration.

The Coalition of Labor Union Women condemned Mitsubishi's actions, saying that "it is the responsibility of employers to ensure workplaces free of sexual harassment. It is the law."

— James B. Parks

OCAW seeks to regain jobs at refinery

Locked-out members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers have gone to court in a campaign to regain their jobs at a TOSCO gasoline refinery.

The union filed unfair labor practice charges against the company with the NLRB, claiming TOSCO refused to bargain to impasse over its decision to idle the Marcus Hook, Pa., refinery. The union is seeking back pay for the more than 300 hourly employees who were locked out when the plant closed.

A federal lawsuit filed March 15 alleges the company forced the previous owners, British Petroleum, to abrogate the contract with OCAW. Another suit by 11 former BP workers claims TOSCO is violating the preferential hiring clauses in the purchase agreement by refusing to hire any of the former BP employees for the 45 jobs it created to keep the plant in its mothballed condition.

The issue came to a head when TOSCO bought BP's Northeast U.S. assets in February. TOSCO had demanded that BP close the Marcus Hook refinery in eastern Pennsylvania by Jan. 31 or it would not complete the deal.

More than 300 of the 500 employees at the refinery, which produced about 190,000 barrels of gasoline a day, were represented by OCAW Local 8-234. The collective bargaining agreement required six months' notice of a plant closing. BP was forced to close the plant with two month's notice, leaving only one month for OCAW to negotiate with TOSCO.

The plant has been closed with only skeleton staff since Feb. 1 and TOSCO has refused to say whether it plans to reopen the plant or close it permanently, leaving the workers, their families and the community in limbo.

"Had TOSCO not caused BP to break the six-month advance-notice provision in the contract, it is very likely that we would have had enough time to work out the numerous issues that they insisted were necessary to keep the Marcus Hook refinery open," said Denis Stephano, president of OCAW Local 8-234.

Stephano charged that TOSCO is trying to improve its short-term profitability by reducing the supply of gasoline in the Northeast. The New York Times reported that gasoline prices surged on the New York Mercantile Exchange after TOSCO announced it might permanently close the Marcus Hook plant. The company's stock has risen with the acquisition of BP's assets and the company is trying to extract subsidies from the state for a needed $50 million "turnaround" on the refinery, the union said.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

New SEIU President Andy Stern and re-elected Secretary-Treasurer Betty Bednarczyk are joined by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney at a rally supporting a living-wage initiative in Chicago.

SEIU sets course behind Stern

Union issues challenge to giant health care firms

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Delegates to the 75th Service Employees convention set the stage to move the union into the 21st century with the election of 45-year-old Andy Stern as president, the endorsement of President Clinton, rallies for living wages and the adoption of a plan to shape the union's future.

For the first time, delegates cast secret ballots on the presidential endorsement and overwhelmingly voted to endorse the re-election of Clinton. Clinton received 85 percent of the 639 votes, while consumer advocate Ralph Nader received 12 percent, and Republican candidate Sen. Robert Dole (Kan.) and a Labor Party Advocates candidate each received 1 percent.

Prior to the union's endorsement, Clinton addressed the delegates live via satellite.

Stern is the youngest person ever elected to head the union. Delegates also re-elected Secretary-Treasurer Betty Bednarczyk, the first woman to serve in a high-ranking position at the union. She was elected on an interim basis in December.

SEIU will be the "strongest, smartest, toughest organizing machine in North America," said Stern, who was vice president and director of organizing for the union for the past 12 years.

Some of the organizing begins with a corporate campaign targeting health care moguls Kaiser Permanente, Beverly Enterprises and Vencor-Hillhaven, delegates declared. During the convention, the union ran full-page newspaper ads in The San Francisco Examiner and the Louisville Courier-Journal criticizing the companies for being "the worst of corporate America."

The ads asked consumers who have had problems with quality care to call an 800 number to report their complaints. The union is involved in labor disputes at all three companies. At Kaiser, some 30,000 workers in California are working without contracts.

"For American workers, these are snapshots from hell," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney in referring to the health care giants. "They paint an ugly portrait of a country that has lost respect for workers and the jobs they do. American workers are running out of money, running out of options and running out of hope."

Convention delegates approved the recommendations of the union's Committee on the Future for a massive shift in resources to organizing, stepped-up political action programs, more coordinated multiunion partnerships, increased participation of members at all levels and expanded leadership opportunities for members of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.

Delegates approved a constitutional amendment to elect three new executive vice presidents. They are SEIU Local 616 Executive Director Pat Ford, the first African-American woman elected to a top office; SEIU Local 79 President Paul Policicchio; and Eliseo Medina, the first Latino elected to a top office.

Reflecting the union's youth movement, the delegates also elected 14 vice presidents and 43 executive board members who ran as a slate unopposed. They include 13 women and 11 people of color. Tyrone Freemon, 26, became the youngest member ever elected to the executive board. Stern himself was elected to the board at 29.

Delegates approved an increase in the per capita tax of 25 cents per member per month in each of the next four years, beginning in 1997. The finance committee recommended 50 percent of the increase be allocated for organizing and the remaining 50 percent go to nonorganizing programs.

Delegates also authorized an increase in dues. Locals that have a flat rate will see an increase of $1 per month in each of the next four years, beginning in September. Those locals with a percentage dues system will see their dues increased by one-tenth of 1 percent each year.

Other convention speakers included Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.); Mayor Richard Daley; the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, president of the National Rainbow Coalition; Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund; House Minority Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.); Phillip Jennings, general secretary of FIET; Herbert Maier, deputy director general for the International Labor Organization; Candace Gingrich, spokeswoman for the Human Rights Campaign Fund and Newt Gingrich's sister; Secretary of Labor Robert Reich; Robert White, president of the Canadian Labour Congress; and Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez.

Good chemistry joins ICWU with UFCW

The Chemical Workers approved a merger with the Food and Commercial Workers during a special convention April 29-30 in Las Vegas. Ninety-one percent of the delegates voted for the new alliance.

"From everything we've seen and learned in a year of dealing with the UFCW, the ICWU, its members and employees will only benefit from the merger," said ICWU President Frank D. Martino.

UFCW President Douglas Dority welcomed the merger vote, saying it "provides positive benefits for both organizations, and will reinvigorate the bargaining power of the ICWU and service to its members."

The merger is the third for the UFCW in the past several years. Also joining the UFCW, the third largest union in the federation, were the United Garment Workers, the United Textile Workers and the Distillery Workers.

The ICWU now becomes the International Chemical Workers Union Council of the UFCW, representing 34,000 workers.

Detroit strike takes toll on scab papers

By James B. Parks

Detroit's two newspapers are trying to put on a good face, but they can't hide the fact that the 10-month strike has cut circulation, advertising and profits.

Since the strike began, the combined circulation of the Free Press and News has dropped 60 percent for home delivery and 50 percent overall, according to a survey released May 1 by the striking unions.

"They're killing a lot of trees, but they're not selling a lot of papers," said Al Derey, chairman of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, which represents the strikers.

The newspapers, which claim they have not lost nearly that much circulation, dodged an opportunity to have a reputable, independent audit of its numbers. For the second time in eight months, both papers refused to release circulation figures to the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the national auditing company used by most major advertisers and newspapers.

The papers' continued failure to release data to the Audit Bureau "has to create severe credibility problems for them with advertisers," Derey said. "Somebody who is paying to buy an ad in a newspaper wants to know how many readers they are reaching. They want to see data from the Audit Bureau, and if they don't see it, they are going to be suspicious."

Company documents also show the Detroit Newspaper Agency, which jointly publishes the News and Free Press, is carrying more than $9 million in unpaid bills from subscriptions and street sales, more than $3 million of which has been written off as uncollectible.

The unions' campaign to get readers to drop the publishers' flagship papers is growing. After AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney sent letters to South Florida trade unionists asking them to cancel their subscriptions to The Miami Herald, the flagship of Free Press owner Knight-Ridder, about 1,500 dropped the paper, the unions said.

Sweeney also has written to affiliated unions, urging them to support a "do not buy, do not advertise" campaign against USA Today, the flagship of Gannett Publishing, owner of the News.

For the second time since the strike began, the AFL-CIO and affiliated unions plan to hold a mass demonstration outside Gannett's headquarters in Arlington, Va., to support the strikers. The May 7 march will coincide with Gannett's annual stockholders' meeting.

The strikers and their supporters turned out in force at Knight-Ridder's annual stockholders' meeting in Miami to take their case directly to the company's owners.

Susan Watson, a 30-year veteran of the Free Press, told the stockholders that "short-sighted corporate managers have done terrible damage to a great newspaper and to its reputation for truth and integrity." Knight-Ridder officials have estimated that the strike will cost their company $127 million in losses and foregone profits in 1995 and 1996.

Striking unions have made repeated proposals to settle the strike, Watson said, which was caused when the company illegally refused to bargain in good faith over its demands for job, wage and benefit cuts.

But even as the unions were calling for a settlement, the papers once again showed their recalcitrance. Less than a week after the annual meeting, the Free Press declared an impasse in its negotiations with The Newspaper Guild, ruling its newsroom an open shop and putting its last contract offer into effect for 220 editorial employees.

"We view their action as illegal and we will take the appropriate legal steps to challenge that," said Lou Mleczko, president of TNG Local 22. The union still is waiting for further information on the company's offer that it requested at a Feb. 13 meeting, the last time the two sides met, Mleczko said.

Meanwhile, an administrative law judge resumed a hearing April 29 on an unfair labor practice complaint the regional office of the National Labor Relations Board filed against the newspapers last year.

USWA confronts LTV stockholders over minimill

By James B. Parks

The Steelworkers accused LTV Steel Co. of violating labor laws by attempting to prevent workers from attending the company's annual meeting, where union leaders ripped management's plans for a nonunion minimill in Alabama.

The union filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board claiming that LTV threatened to deny workers time off to attend the meeting, to videotape attendees and to ban union activities on company premises.

Despite the threats, some 1,400 USWA members, most of them stockholders, showed up for the April 15 annual meeting in Cleveland, occupying most of the seats in the auditorium.

"The company should know by now it cannot intimidate our members," said Michael Scarver, a USWA staff representative. "The company should also know that our members attended the meeting because they were outraged by the company's betrayal and that the union will vigorously defend their right to demonstrate their outrage," Scarver said.

The workers are outraged that LTV, in partnership with British Steel and Sumitomo Metals, is building a nonunion mill in Decatur, Ala., called Trico, which the union charges will steal jobs of present LTV workers.

"This contemptuous plot is management's way of thanking its union workers for hundreds of millions of dollars in economic sacrifices, reductions in pensions and insurance and the loss of thousands upon thousands of jobs — a decade of sacrifice that saved the company from liquidation and restored it to profitability," USWA Secretary-Treasurer Leo Gerard told the stockholders.

"They have undermined the most basic element required to operate a successful business — the trust of its employees," Gerard said.

The Trico mill will have a capacity of more than 2 million tons, or about 25 percent of the company's current total capacity, Gerard said. Unless the company can increase its market share by that amount — which is unlikely, since the industry has excess capacity already — LTV's existing plants will be endangered, he said.

"Who gets lost?" Gerard asked. "Which kid's dad or mom loses a job? Which town loses a plant?"

The USWA has contract provisions that prevent outsourcing by most of the major steelmakers, but the union is concerned that companies throughout the industry will follow LTV's lead and shift production to nonunion mills such as Trico.

"Trico figures in greatly to our whole approach to everything going on in the industry," said David Foster, a USWA district director. "To us it's a question of jobs. We want to follow the jobs."

Gerard told the LTV shareholders that until the Trico dispute is settled, the union will not participate with LTV in joint union-management partnership programs, which the union has negotiated with other major steelmakers.

The union also has taken its concerns to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp., noting that the company's pension fund is currently underfunded by $1.2 billion.

Utility program is textbook case of school to work

By Muriel H. Cooper

A model school-to-work program coordinated by Utility Workers Local 246 and the Southern California Edison Co. is pointing the way to how communities can form partnerships to help young people make the transition from school to careers.

In helping to supply qualified workers for entry-level positions, the school-to-work program is essential to close the income gap between workers with a high school education and those with college degrees, Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich said.

The Jobs Skills Partnership in California is an academic year-long work furlough program with students paired with journeyman mentors. The students spend half the day attending classes and then report to work.

The students are classified as student utility trainees, but are treated as regular workers. They receive the same protections and rights as union members covered by the collective bargaining agreement.

"We negotiated for their pay, and any raises that we get as a result of our contract, they get too," said Jack M. Gravener, educational program coordinator for the local.

"This is a unique example of how unions can have a leadership role in school-to-work programs," he said. "By having unions involved, we end up with high school kids leaving school with skills, and they don't enter the job market as cheap labor replacing permanent workers," he said.

The six-year-old program preceded President Clinton's School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, which established a national framework for states to develop programs to help ease the transition of high school students into their first jobs by providing job training skills.

"There was a need to look at non-college-bound students, and show them that they could build their skills, that there is value in working with your hands," said Gravener.

Students from 10 high schools in California, Nevada and Arizona participate in the program, working six-week rotations in maintenance, operations, administration, warehouse and technical occupations.

For example, students in the maintenance department have saved the department about $3,000 in new inventory stock by reusing and organizing drill bits.

"Over the years, the machine shop has accumulated bucketsfull of used drill bits," said Dick Wurzer, a mentor in the program. "Searching for a specific size was always time-consuming and frustrating," and many times when the bit was found, it would have to be sharpened, he said. "Eventually, it became easier to just get a new drill bit."

The students now have learned how to sharpen the bits and organize them near their specific machinery. "This makes the journeyman's job easier as well as lowers the cost to continually restock the tooling inventory. It certainly has proved to be a win-win situation," he said.

The program also contains a strong union-building aspect. "Before joining the program, many of these kids knew nothing about unions," Gravener said. "They just had no reason to think about unions. Now they know that a union has given them a safe, healthy workplace. They know what is good about a union."

The program has an educational component for the workers as well. More than 100 union workers have volunteered as mentors, interacting with the school counselors and students to assess their learning experience.

"I haven't thought about the 'why' of my jobs in years," said Carlos Ortiz, a station machinist. "My student kept me on my toes."

Reich joined Education Secretary Richard W. Riley March 8 in announcing that 37 communities will receive more than $20 million for local school-to-work partnerships. The grants will go to communities that have formed partnerships between the business and education sectors.

"School-to-work gives high school students the tools to apply what is learned in the morning at school directly to what is earned in the afternoon," Reich said.

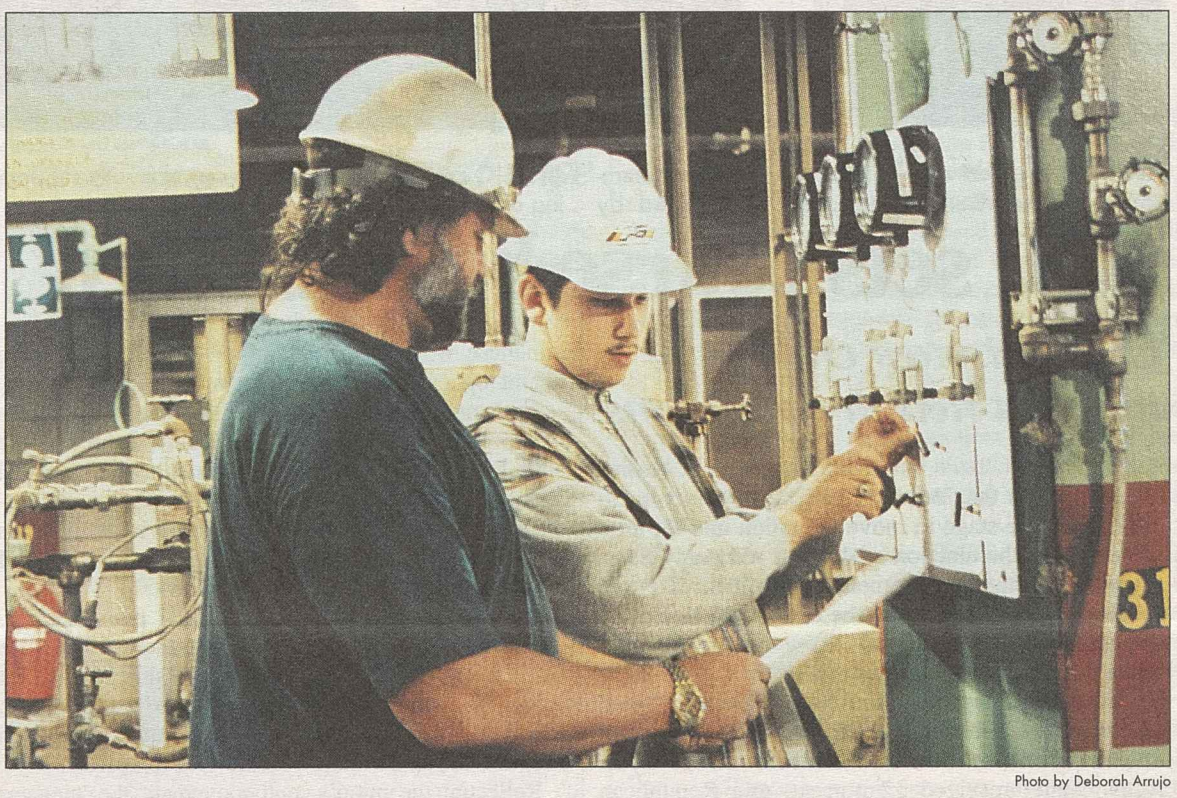


Photo by Deborah Arrujo

Utility Worker Jim Bellmore, an operations specialist at Redondo Generating Station in Los Angeles, explains to Serafin Villalpando, a high school senior, how to use controls that inject dioxide into street water.

ALPA gains job security, board seat in Delta agreement

The Air Line Pilots voted overwhelmingly to approve a four-year contract with Delta Air Lines that promises to increase job security, return furloughed pilots to work, provide employees with an enhanced retirement plan and stock options and reserve a seat on the board of directors.

The ratification came as the airline seeks to meet competition from low-fare, low-wage carriers.

In exchange for wage and health benefit concessions, Delta will rehire 472 furloughed pilots, and pilots will get $10 million in stock options, an improved retirement plan and the same profit-sharing plan as non-contract employees.

"This new agreement meets many of the Delta pilots' stated goals, as well as provides our company with increased productivity and incentives to grow the airline," said Capt. Bill Brown, chairman of ALPA's Master Executive Council at Delta. "I applaud the pilot group for the unity and resolve they demonstrated throughout this difficult and challenging negotiation process."

Delta pilots elected Brown to fill the newly created board seat, which "offers us a unique and unprecedented opportunity to communicate with top-level corporate decision-makers," he said. "I believe this will prove beneficial for all parties, and I am honored to serve the Delta pilots in this important and unprecedented role."

In other airline developments:

- America West Airlines filed a lawsuit against the National Mediation Board, alleging that it erred in its decision to allow fired maintenance workers to vote in a representation election, and that its recent certification of the Teamsters is invalid. IBT, which received an 81 percent vote of confidence from the workers, called the lawsuit "meritless."
- ALPA has reached a tentative first contract with Mountain West Airlines Inc. covering about 400 pilots at the carrier, which operates as America West Express, Mesa Airlines and United Express.
- ALPA has asked the NMB for assistance after more than seven months of fruitless negotiations with Atlantic Southeast Airlines. "We are disappointed with management's total disregard for fairness in these negotiations," said unit head S. Paul Horsley.

BARGAINING

AFTRA, SAG ratify deal

The Television and Radio Artists and the Screen Actors April 18 jointly ratified a three-year pact with producers of nonbroadcast and industrial films.

The new contract covers more than 27,000 employees who work on industrial and educational films, videos and slides. The contract calls for a 7 percent pay raise over the first 18 months and additional overtime pay for on-camera narrators and spokespersons. Employers will contribute 0.5 percent more in health and pension contributions.

Contract covers 20,000

Senior clerks at Chicago-area Jewel Food Stores will receive wage increases of 35 cents per hour each year under a new three-year contract ratified by the Food and Commercial Workers. The contract, which covers some 20,000 UFCW Local 881 members at 172 stores, was ratified April 22.

Clerks at the top of the wage scale will receive the 35-cent raises. They had earned $13.70 per hour under the previous pact. Employees who have worked less than 54 months will receive lump-sum payments in 1996 and 1997 equal to 35 cents for each hour worked in the previous year, along with a general 35-cent-an-hour raise in September 1997. Department heads will receive 40-cents-an-hour raises in each of the three years.

The contract also revises language on store closings, offering a severance package for employees with at least three years on the job.

IBEW, Niagara Mohawk agree

The Electrical Workers approved a new five-year, three-month contract with Niagara Mohawk Power Co. that calls for productivity enhancements, job flexibility and work-practice changes.

The new contract, ratified April 3 by members of IBEW Local 97, does not include a pay increase in the first year, but calls for annual adjustments totaling 10.5 percent in the next four years.

If the 6,600 production, maintenance and clerical employees at the New York utility are able to help the company achieve cost savings of $8 million in 1996, they will be eligible for up to 2 percent more in wages in 1997. For every $1 million saved through more efficient work practices and job flexibility, employees would get 0.25 percent increases in wages.

The pension formula also was changed to allow earlier retirements.

Lockheed Machinists ratify

Working to the final hours, the Machinists ratified a new three-year contract with Lockheed Martin April 21, hours before a strike was set to begin.

The bulk of the 4,800 employees covered by the contract work at the Marietta, Ga., plant. The deal also includes several hundred workers at facilities in Charleston, S.C., Clarksburg, W.Va., and Meridian, Miss.

"Job security was the key," IAM President George Kourpias said. "Lockheed Martin wanted to subcontract 67 union janitorial and maintenance jobs, and our members refused. If a company can subcontract the janitors' work today, they'll subcontract whatever else they want tomorrow. Our members understood that, and forcing Lockheed Martin to drop their subcontracting demands was the key to this settlement."

Under the contract, workers will receive a $2,000 cash wage supplement within 15 days of the ratification along with a $600 cost-of-living adjustment supplement. A second $600 COLA supplement will be paid in December. There will be a 3 percent wage increase in 1997 and another $600 COLA supplement, followed by a lump-sum payment equal to 3 percent of earnings in 1998.

Grain Millers OK pacts

Grain Millers' policy committees have accepted new three-year agreements with General Mills and Pillsbury. The agreements deal only with benefit changes, with wage provisions, seniority and work rules left to separate talks at the individual plants.

The General Mills pact covers 3,400 employees at 16 plants and increases the pension formula from $31 per month per year of service to $34, sets up an alternative health care plan and establishes a 401(k) plan.

The Pillsbury deal covers 800 employees at three plants and increases the pension formula from $28 to $32, increases the lifetime maximum health care coverage and also sets up a 401(k) plan.



UFW photo

Waving flags to honor the memory of Farm Workers founder Cesar Chavez, some 8,000 strawberry pickers and their supporters rallied in Watsonville, Calif., demanding better wages and working conditions.

8,000 march for berry workers

UFW in organizing drive to improve conditions

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Some 8,000 Farm Workers and their supporters formed a crimson wave as they marched through the streets of Watsonville, Calif., with red flags to commemorate the third anniversary of Cesar Chavez' death and to call for better conditions for local strawberry pickers.

Shouting "Viva Chavez," supporters who drove from as far away as Los Angeles and the Central Valley for the April 21 march included students from the University of California at Berkeley, San Jose State University and the University of California at Santa Cruz. But most in the crowd were Spanish-speaking strawberry workers who earn a meager living tilling the soil of millionnaire California growers.

"I think the most important thing we can do to keep Cesar's memory alive is to bring about dignity and respect for these workers and their families," UFW President Arturo S. Rodriguez told the crowd. "The wages for workers here are low, sometimes below minimum wage. There are no medical benefits or paid vacation."

The union's new campaign will target growers who employ some 15,000 strawberry workers in the area and 30,000 statewide, mostly in Santa Cruz and the Salinas Valley area. Strawberry pickers have been able to join unions at some farms, but still are among the lowest-paid farm laborers in the state.

"The growers should not be intimidated just because we want to better our lives," Rodriguez declared.

While California is the nation's leading producer of strawberries, the UFW wants its growers to lead the industry by providing better pay, health benefits for workers and their families, a pension plan and a grievance system.

The union already has experienced some success with strawberry growers. Last August, 400 strawberry workers at VCNM Farms in Salinas struck for three days, and returned to work after the company agreed to raise seasonal workers' hourly pay by 50 cents to $4.50 and permanent workers' pay by $1 to $6.

The company also agreed to fire six supervisors whom the workers accused of sexual harassment and other wrongdoing. The workers voted 332 to 50 for union representation two days later.

The UFW's ranks have swelled from a low of about 15,000 in the late 1980s to 25,000 today, according to the union. Roughly 40 percent are women.

Buyers asked to drop Botany pants

By James B. Parks

The Electronic Workers are expanding their campaign for a fair contract at Master Apparel to the company's customers and the courts.

"We are not going to stand by and let Master Apparel break the labor laws of this country and abuse its hard-working employees," Willie Rudd, president of IUE's furniture worker's division, told an April 1 rally outside the plant gates in Somerville, Tenn.

The 250 workers, represented by IUE Local 282, have been trying for more than two years to negotiate a new contract to replace one that expired in May 1994.

In an effort to pressure the company, the union has written Master Apparel's top customers — Kmart, Montgomery Ward and the Blair mail-order company — asking that they not buy clothes from Master Apparel until the labor dispute is settled.

At the request of the IUE, the AFL-CIO has placed Master Apparel's men's and boys' pants on its national boycott list. The pants are sold under the "Botany 500" label at Kmart, under "Hills and Archer" at Montgomery Ward and under "Blair" through the Blair company.

The National Labor Relations Board also has warned Master Apparel that it faces contempt charges for failing to obey a court order to bargain. Currently, there are no new negotiations scheduled, Rudd said. "Master Apparel will come back to the table," he said, "but they've only been going through the motions" of bargaining.

The major issues in the dispute are union representation, wages and health care benefits, Rudd said. The company, a subsidiary of New York-based Masterwear Corp., is demanding a clause in the contract that would allow it to bar union representatives from the premises at any time.

"What they want is no union," Rudd said. "How can you represent your workers if you can't come on the premises?"

On the issue of wages, the company is willing to give the mostly African-American work force a 15-cent-an-hour raise in the first year of a three-year contract, Rudd said, with any future raises left to the company's discretion. That is unacceptable for the workers, many of whom are single parents and heads of households and who have not had a pay increase in more than two years, he said. The average wage in the plant is $5.75 an hour.

On health care, the workers want an increase in the lifetime maximum benefit, which is currently $10,000 per worker under Master Apparel's self-insured program. "Some of the workers have already maxed out," Rudd said. "Ten thousand dollars over a lifetime is just not enough," he said.

"All the workers want is justice," Rudd said. "The company is proud of saying that it's making record profits. But those profits come from the sweat of these workers and they deserve better than what they are getting.

"Master Apparel has got to understand that we will not go away. They must deal with us and they msut deal with us fairly, openly and with respect," he said.

Corporate chiefs roll in dough

Wall Street is rewarding job slashers most of all

By David Kameras

Corporate executives continue to rake in outrageous compensation packages, fanning the flames around congressional Republicans who oppose an increase in the federal minimum wage and efforts to restore corporate responsibility.

Perhaps most outrageous is that compensation is even greater for those CEOs who have presided over mass firings of workers.

CEOs at 22 firms that laid off at least 3,000 workers in 1995 scored an average raise of 13.6 percent, compared with 10.4 percent for top executives in general, according to a report by the Institute for Policy Studies. "The divide between the Wall Street winners and the Main Street workers has never been greater," said John Cavanagh, co-author of the report.

IPS found that Wall Street amply rewards job-slashers. Stock prices rose or held steady the same day layoffs were announced at 17 of the firms. At two other firms, analysts said prices fell because job cuts were less than desirable. Stock price run-ups increased the value of CEOs' stock options by $37 million.

In its annual survey of the starchiest of white collars, Business Week discovered that CEOs at the 20 companies with the largest announced layoffs last year saw their salaries and bonuses jump by 25 percent, some by considerably more.

Boeing CEO Frank Shrontz got a pay package worth $5.9 million, up 73 percent in a year where 23,000 layoffs were announced. American Home Products Corp. Chairman John R. Stafford netted $9.7 million in total pay, a 132 percent gain while 4,000 workers were laid off. And in the most infamous case, AT&T Chairman Robert Allen saw his pay package jump 143 percent to $15.9 million after giving pink slips to 40,000 people.

When Vencor Inc. acquired Hillhaven Corp. last year, CEO W. Bruce Lunsford saw his compensation jump from $1.8 million to over $4.9 million. Yet some 2,000 of the company's nursing home workers who have been working without a contract since 1994 are still denied a 15 percent increase on wages that start below $6 an hour. Management has offered 6 percent.

Although Caterpillar Inc. Chairman Donald V. Fites got a 75 percent raise in total pay, the bonus pool for other employees dropped by 25 percent, and union workers who had struck the company didn't qualify for a bonus at all.

"It's pretty sad that the company can tell us it can't afford an across-the-board increase for the workers but Fites can get a 75 percent raise," Jerome Brown, president of the UAW local in Peoria, Ill., told Business Week. "We've made this company competitive, but there's nothing there for the workers."

And many of these executives are not merely getting a golden pat on the back for a job well done. Over a three-year period, Gerald Levin of Time Warner got $15.5 million in total pay, while the company's average return on equity was 12 percent in the red. Stanley Goldstein at Melville got close to $5 million for turning in a 5 percent decline in company performance. The top paycheck went to Lawrence Coss of Green Tree Financial Corp., with $65.6 million.

While average salary and bonus for chief executives rose 18 percent last year to $1.7 million, gains from such long-term compensation as stock options kicked it up 30 percent to $3.8 million, or a weekly pay envelope of more than $72,000, observed AFL-CIO economist Frank Parente. Today, average CEO pay is 145 times the average factory wage and 423 times the minimum wage.

Since 1980, CEO pay has risen by 499 percent, far ahead of the minimum wage (37 percent), factory wages (70 percent), consumer prices (85 percent) and even corporate profits (145 percent). In the past five years alone, CEO pay rose 92 percent while layoffs increased by 39 percent, with nearly 440,000 jobs lost last year alone.

"If factory workers had received pay raises between 1980 and 1995 comparable to CEOs, they would now be paid $90,000 per year," Parente said. "If the minimum wage had risen like CEO pay, minimum wage workers would now receive almost $39,000 per year."

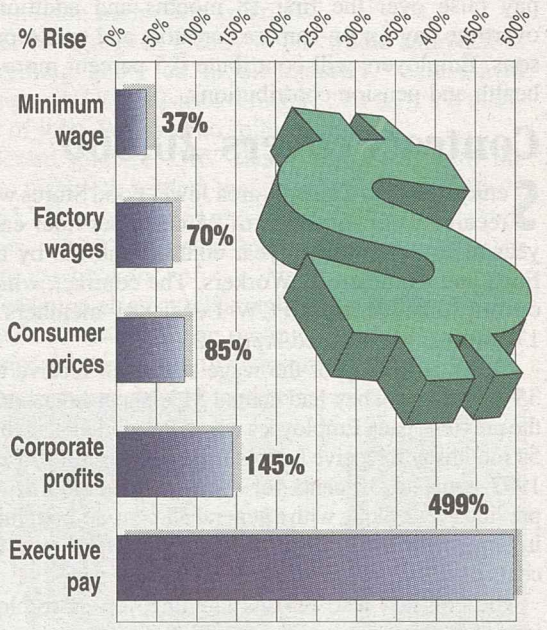
Trade unionists are fighting back, using proxies and shareholder proposals to get their concerns heard in the boardroom. The AFL-CIO is developing a database to help its affiliated unions monitor corporate behavior and prepare responses.

For three years, Electrical Workers Local 824 has asked GTE Corp. shareholders to cap compensation for its top brass at 75 times that of the average hourly employee. "If the gap continues, what kind of jobs will our children have?" Local 824 Treasurer Dick O'Lone asked the Wall Street Journal. "What kind of living conditions will our children have? It's not just a GTE issue. It's an American issue."

DATA

Executive pay soars

15-year trend, 1980-1995



Note: After tax profits. Average hourly earnings for production and nonsupervisory workers in manufacturing not adjusted for inflation.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

AFL-CIO NEWSGRAFIC

Trade deficit continues to take toll on jobs and wages

The U.S. merchandise trade deficit improved in February, but continues on a course that could result in another record year of red ink.

The merchandise trade gap narrowed from $14 billion to $10.6 billion. But for the year to date, the figure was $24.6 billion, up from $24.1 billion during the same period a year earlier.

"While showing improvement over January, the goods trade deficit for the first two months of 1996 is larger than the record 1995 level, and continues to be a significant drag on the wages of working Americans," said Mark Anderson, director of the AFL-CIO Task Force on Trade.

Merchandise has been a growing component of America's burgeoning trade imbalance. In 1980, imports to the United States totaled $245 billion, 54 percent of which were manufactured goods. In 1995, imports reached $744 billion, with 85 percent manufactured goods.

The one-month improvement in the deficit wasn't felt in the trade in goods with Mexico, which worsened from $1.26 billion to $1.3 billion, reflective of the changes that have taken place since the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect. In 1994, the United States enjoyed a trade surplus of $1.4 billion with Mexico. One year later, the surplus had turned into a deficit of $15.4 billion.

Taking into account the $18.2 billion deficit with Canada, an estimated 575,000 U.S. job opportunities were lost, Anderson said. For the two-year period, the Labor Department certified petitions covering 53,210 workers, a fraction of those actually affected, for NAFTA transitional adjustment assistance.

The wages of NAFTA

The signs are everywhere that the 60 percent drop in the value of the peso under NAFTA has had a depressing effect on compensation on both sides of the border.

"Since NAFTA was enacted, six industries that account for 85 percent of Illinois exports have had an average layoff rate of 75.2 per 10,000 workers," the Illinois Fair Trade Campaign reported. "That's two-and-a-half times the state average and over three times greater than other manufacturing industries." Adjusted wages that remained in the top five industries either fell or stagnated.

"We believe that NAFTA and its broader approach to development has been bad for most people in the U.S., Mexico and Canada," the report said. "The development policies contained in NAFTA tend to keep interest rates high and wages low, while eliminating government policies designed to help people who find themselves unemployed or without living-wage jobs."

Five years ago, a Kenmex plant in Baja California delivered 90 percent of the Kenworth trucks it produces to Mexican customers. Today the same percentage is sent to the United States and other points in the hemisphere.

"The wages of American workers are inevitably driven down when they are forced to compete with workers in other countries who toil for pennies an hour, few benefits and no workplace or environmental safety protections," Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) said. "Whatever benefit American workers gain in the form of cheaper shorts when Fruit of the Loom moves to Mexico is more than offset by the loss of purchasing power as real hourly wages drop."

Labor officials from the three NAFTA countries meeting May 15 in Mexico City will hear a proposal for a series of meetings later this year to examine such issues as employer-union relations and the impact of collective bargaining on productivity. Included in the discussions may be announcement of a safety review process aimed at resolving the cross-border dispute between the United States and Mexico over trucking that has delayed trade liberalization in that sector.

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich is awaiting a report from the U.S. National Administrative Office, a NAFTA-related agency, before acting on a request by labor and human rights groups to investigate bias by the Mexican government in registering labor unions. The groups earlier had charged that such bias prevents workers from gaining representation by truly independent unions, as they have sought to do at a Sony Corp. plant in Nuevo Laredo.

The Mexican government's labor policies were in evidence last month when riot police expelled from Mexico City's central plaza thousands of bus drivers who were rallying to protest their being fired as part of the government's privatization efforts.

"Favoritism" with China

Across the Pacific, cheap wages in China continue to deprive Americans of jobs and technology, even as the administration considers extending most-favored-nation trade status to a country infamous for its abuse of worker and human rights. The bilateral merchandise trade imbalance there was $2.4 billion in February, up from $1.9 billion a year earlier.

The Machinists and the UAW have urged President Clinton to make a Section 301 trade complaint against China for discriminatory industrial policies that threaten thousands of aerospace and auto parts jobs.

"Many jobs could be created here if China's markets were open to U.S. exports of products in which we have the skill and technology advantages," said a UAW bargaining program statement. "But so far, China's rulers restrict access to their markets, and instead seek to develop their own auto and aerospace industries protected from American-made products."

The UAW also said it wants contract provisions here to "limit the ability of companies to abandon American workers by moving production to China to exploit the lack of free trade unions there."

Meanwhile, the European Community and Canada backed U.S. Ambassador Booth Gardner April 15 in his call to the World Trade Organization to place labor rights on its agenda at its ministerial meeting in Singapore in December.

— David Kameras

UNION NEWS

IAFF warnings ignored

Months prior to the shooting deaths of four Jackson, Miss., Fire Fighters by a fellow officer, IAFF President Alfred K. Whitehead warned the city council of the potential for violence in the fire department.

"The warnings were ignored by those in authority," Whitehead told reporters after an April 29 memorial service for the men, who were slaughtered during a meeting at the central fire station.

The study cited many problems, including the dictatorial culture created by Fire Chief Joe Donovan, who resigned after the shootings. Last November, Whitehead urged the council and Mayor Kane Ditto to seek Donovan's resignation. Neither took action, even though rank-and-file fire fighters revealed flagrant problems in the department.

CWA, IBEW review merger

The unions representing workers at Bell Atlantic and NYNEX are carefully reviewing the proposed corporate merger that would create the nation's second-largest telecommunications company.

The Communications Workers and Electrical Workers planned to meet with management from both companies to discuss the merger's impact on workers and consumers, who should continue to receive the first-class level of service they have come to expect, they said.

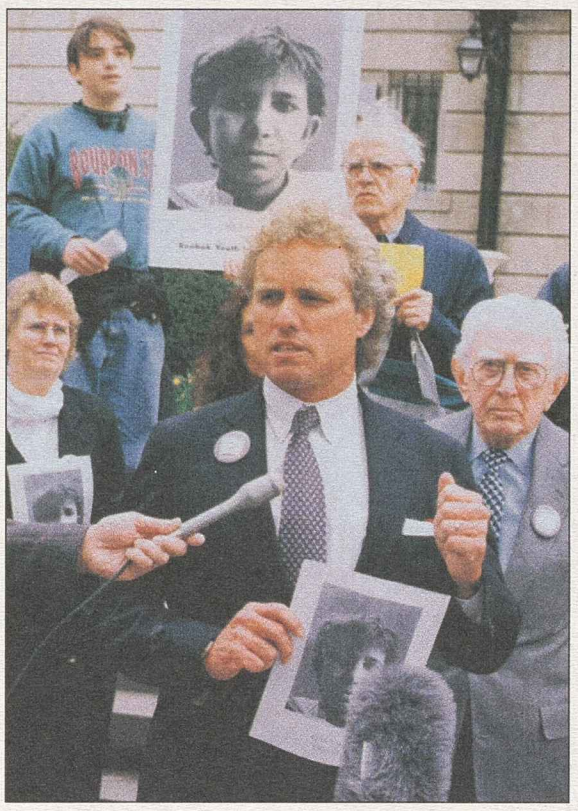
CWA President Morton Bahr and IBEW President John J. Barry agreed that the unions' initial concern is that this corporate reshuffling not result in layoffs and lower wages.

Rail talks mixed

Talks between the nation's rail unions and most of the large freight carriers have been moving along in fits and starts, which could lead to a strike later this year.

The National Mediation Board April 29 released the Maintenance of Way Employees from mediation. While the union has yet to decide whether to accept binding arbitration, that path has been rejected by the Electrical Workers, Machinists, Railroad Signalmen and Sheet Metal Workers. So far, only the United Transportation Union has accepted arbitration, a step it took after members turned down an earlier contract offer.

Locomotive Engineers at the Union Pacific and Santa Fe railroads have ratified contracts, but talks at Eastern railroads have been unproductive. The Transportation Communications Union, which was released from mediation April 5, has set a strike date of May 9.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II (D-Mass.) displays a photo of 12-year-old Iqbal Masih, a former bonded laborer who was killed last year while trying to end child labor in Pakistan. The Washington vigil celebrated the first hand-knotted imported carpets arriving in the United States bearing the RUGMARK label signifying child-free labor.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Food and Commercial Workers demonstrated May 1 outside the Belgian Embassy to protest the treatment of U.S. workers by Belgian-based multinational Delhaize, parent of Food Lion. In solidarity, Belgian employees of Delhaize marched in front of the U.S. Embassy in Brussels. "Delhaize is an international hypocrite," said UFCW Local 400 President Thomas R. McNutt. "They observe worker rights in Belgium and France and Greece, but not in America," he said. Food Lion has a long history of labor law violations in the United States, and was forced in 1993 to pay $16.2 million for violating child labor and overtime pay laws.

Workers seek education

The union commitment to workplace learning was on display at a two-day conference co-sponsored by the AFL-CIO and several affiliated unions in Milwaukee and coordinated by the University of Wisconsin. The overflow crowd of 1,100 included 250 unionists, including representatives from Canadian unions, who were responsible for 30 presentations.

"I'm proud labor's a big part of this conference," said AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson in opening remarks April 29. "We believe in (workplace learning), we're all for it and we commend you for your dedication to it."

How workers attain skills and how employers advance them was the chief focus of the conference. Sessions looked at school-to-work initiatives, current labor-management education projects, worker-centered learning, training in a health care setting, workplace literacy and Mexican and Canadian experiences, among many others. A task force also was formed to promote a union-building agenda for workplace learing.

Jobs, balance sought

A report by the President's Council on Sustainable Development stresses the need to "sustain a healthy U.S. economy that grows sufficiently to create meaningful jobs, reduce poverty and provide the opportunity for a high quality of life for all in an increasingly competitive world."

The AFL-CIO was represented on the council by President Emeritus Tom Donahue. The report maintained that government "has, in some cases, an obligation to address the human consequences of policy decisions on environmental, trade or defense issues that result in job losses in a community."

The group made a number of recommendations intended to promote worker education and training, ensure an adequate minimum wage, strengthen worker health and safety standards and revitalize cities, including improvement of public transportation. In addition, establishment of a national commission to review the effect of federal tax and subsidy policies was advocated.

"Overall the report is a good one, and one of the best reports that has attempted to build a consensus on an issue involving environmentalists, government, business and labor," said Rudy Oswald, economist in residence at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies.

RESOURCES

CONFERENCES

The AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department is sponsoring a **Coordinated Bargaining Conference** July 8-12 at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. Registration is $55. Contact the IUD at 202/842-7862.

The **Coalition of Black Trade Unionists' 25th anniversary convention** will be held May 23-25 at the Fontainebleau Hilton Resort and Spa in Miami Beach, Fla. Contact Wil Duncan at 202/429-1203.

The **8th National Labor-Management Conference** will be held May 29-31 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago. AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney is the key-note speaker. For more information, call 202/737-2620.

PUBLICATIONS

The following publications were produced by the AFL-CIO Public Policy Department and can be ordered from the AFL-CIO Support Services Department, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; 202/637-5041. **America Needs a Raise** is an issue paper on productivity and workers; and the February and March issues of the **Trade Deficit Monitor**, which detail the expanding U.S. trade deficit.

The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees **1996 Union Hotel Guide** lists some 1,000 union hotel throughout the United States and Canada. Contact HERE, 1219 28th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007; or call 800/HERE-WAY.

Planning for the New Workforce Training and Education Block Grants: What Labor Should Know is a 14-page analysis that urges labor planning and involvement in the anticipated creation of block grants to the states. Contact the Human Resource Development Institute at 202/638-3912.

Productivity Grows, But Workers Don't Share is an issue paper that describes the failure of workers to receive any portion of increasing productivity. Single copies are free, two or more cost $1.50 each, and 50 or more cost $1.25 each. Contact the AFL-CIO Support Services, 815 16th St. N.W., Room 209, Washington, D.C. 20006.

VIDEO

America Speaks, roll-ins from the AFL-CIO special convention, have been combined into a 10-minute video with excerpts from the speeches of AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and Vice President Gore. Contact the AFL-CIO Department of Public Affairs, Broadcast Division, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; or call 202/637-5334.

NEWSMAKERS

Operating Engineers President **Frank Hanley** announced that **John B. Moran** will join the IUOE hazardous materials program to assist in the development of the joint IUOE/Department of Energy International Environmental Technology and Training Center. Moran was a special assistant to the deputy assistant secretary for worker health and safety at the Department of Energy and previously served at the Laborers.

Mark Anderson, 46, has been named acting director of the AFL-CIO Department of Public Policy, effective May 1, replacing **Rudy Oswald**, who retired. Anderson will continue to head up the federation's Task Force on Trade.

AWARDS

Joseph C. Faherty, president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, received the United Way of America's 1996 **Joseph A. Beirne** Community Services Award. The award is named for the first president of the Communications Workers and recognizes a union member's volunteer work with United Way.

Members of **Carpenters Local 217** in San Mateo County, Calif., received the Presidential Service Award for donating time to remove and rebuild a fence around their local YMCA, which sponsors a child care and pre-school program. The project allowed union members to use their skills to improve their community.

DEATH

Grady Mullennix, former labor arbitrator and Fresno State economics professor, has died at age 75.

Mullennix served as an arbitrator in more than 300 labor disputes. He joined the faculty at California State University in 1958, where he founded and served as director of the Institute of Industrial Relations.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Celebrating the launch of Union Summer with Andy Levin, project director, were AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and President John J. Sweeney, as well as some of the young activists who will be in the first wave of the campaign.

Activist youth sent on mission

Continued from Page 1

January Executive Council meeting, has been overwhelming. With the June 1 deadline still weeks away, more than 1,500 people have applied for the three-week internships.

A majority of the applicants are women. About 50 percent are children of union members. Most of the applicants are students. However, there are several activists in their 40s, 50s and 60s. Applications have come from 40 states and three foreign countries.

"As a young, skilled, college-educated worker, I was entering a completely different labor market than the one in which my father and uncles participated," wrote Dominic Perri on his application.

"While I accept that we should be doing different jobs, and perhaps earn different salaries, I also believe we all ought to be able to expect some basic things, like a liveable wage, basic health care, the right to organize and workplace safety. These are not extreme demands, they are basic necessities," he said.

"Reading our applications makes it clear that young people today are hungry to get involved in the fight for workplace justice, not out of a misguided missionary spirit that they are going to save the working class, but out of a healthy sense of solidarity," said Andy Levin, director of Union Summer.

"In today's economy, with the gap between rich and poor widening, real wages going nowhere for the vast majority of Americans, and job security being treated as a quaint relic of another era, young people have a very real fear for their own economic future," he said.

The activists will work in manufacturing, health care, hotel, laundry, newspaper and retail industries to help support and organize workers in their fight for dignity, a living wage, protection from unfair firings, sexual harassment and discrimination, Levin said.

The activists will receive two days of intensive classroom training, which will be supplemented by training modules throughout their internships, and education on how to organize their campus or community when they return home. The training will emphasize practical skill-building, labor history and education on the political economy.

> *"This isn't going to be a summer filled with typing or filing, but rather planning, phone-calling, door-knocking, organizing and demonstrating."*
>
> **— Andy Levin, Union Summer director**

The activists will work on campaigns organizing the new work force — women, people of color and recent immigrants — and campaigns that use innovative, future-oriented tactics and strategies.

"This isn't going to be a summer filled with typing or filing, but rather planning, phone-calling, door-knocking, organizing and demonstrating," Levin said. "This is about giving hands-on experience.

"We hope they get bitten by the organizing bug and will want to continue in this type of work," he said. They will get a taste of different organizing styles, different campaigns and different unions. "It's a brief but intense chance to participate in an organizing campaign," Levin said.

The AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute has been leading a recruitment drive for the program on college campuses and in union halls.

A $210-per-week stipend will be distributed to Union Summer activists, who are being assigned to three-week stints in the various locations around the country.

Sound advice from winning youth

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney received some solid advice from a Massachusetts high school senior.

"President Sweeney and his new leadership need to further people's understanding of the importance of unions," wrote Mary Frances Pauline O'Neill, winner of the state federation's John F. Kennedy scholarship essay contest.

"They must help people to realize that there is strength in numbers that is advantageous to the welfare of all workers."

O'Neill was one of 2,500 commonwealth high school seniors participating in the state federation scholarship program. The students received materials and were quizzed on the history and structure of the labor movement in an effort to qualify for $321,645 worth of scholarship funds.

"Individuals should be able to progress as far as they desire, not just as far as they — or their families — can afford," Sweeney said.

"This is a good way to educate kids about labor history, what unions can do and hopefully inspire others," said Robert J. Haynes, secretary-treasurer and education director for the state federation.

Massachusetts, with its traditional emphasis on higher education, is a leader in providing financial assistance to students from working families, offering more than 160 scholarships through its unions.

The AFL-CIO publishes a guide to union-sponsored scholarships, awards and student financial aid available from the international unions, state federations, central labor councils and regions.

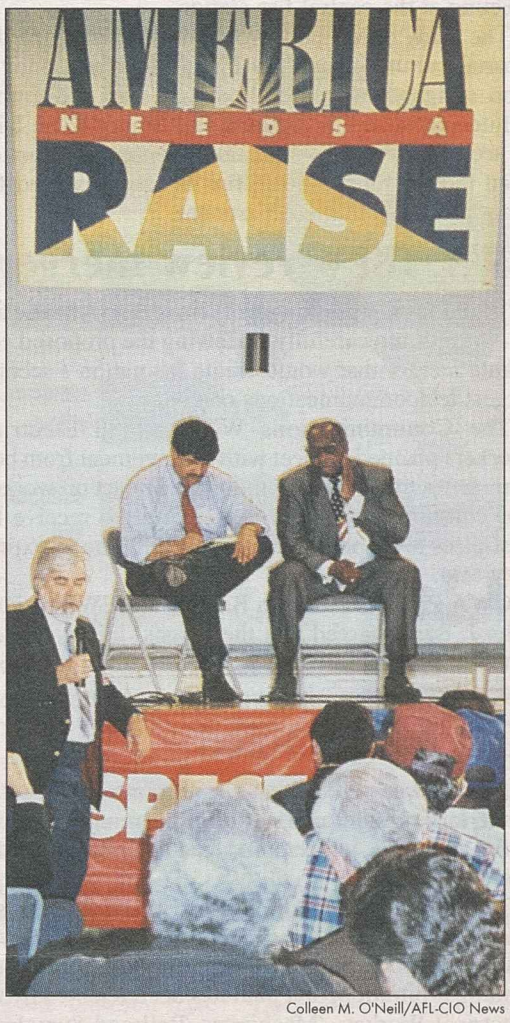
"The need for the aid that this guide lists increases year by year," Sweeney noted. Republican budget-cutters are attacking federal support for colleges and federal aid for students, which could mean higher tuitions and less student aid.

"The labor movement opposes that result," he said.

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 8 MAY 6, 1996

INSIDE



Colleen M. O'Neill/AFL-CIO News

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer William F. Lucy listen to workers' testimony at "America Needs a Raise" town hall meeting in Birmingham, Ala. **See story, Page 1.**



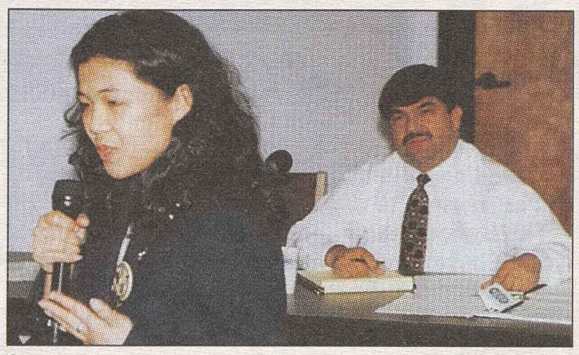
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AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 10 MAY 20, 1996



Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka listens to Vilaykone Southasarn's story of an immigrant family's struggles. **America Needs a Raise, Page 4.**

Union campaigns put workers out front

By Michael Byrne
Portland, Ore.

The AFL-CIO's aggressive efforts to make the case for working families is taking hold, putting workers in the spotlight during this political season, the Executive Council was told.

The council received updates on the series of town hall meetings being held across the country, with workers describing why "America Needs a Raise," on the Union Summer campaign that will put hundreds of young people into organizing and political drives this summer, and on the legislative battles the federation is waging at the grass-roots level.

"Our message that 'America Needs a Raise' is resonating because American working families are struggling in an economy that does not reward their work, but gives huge payouts to the people at the top of the economic ladder," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the council.

That analysis was underpinned by public opinion research presented to the council. Focus groups and polling show that Americans are concerned most about the stress on families caused by the need for both parents to work, and by the job insecurity resulting from corporate downsizing and mergers.

While Americans increasingly side with workers in labor-management disputes, this inclination has not yet created a groundswell of support for unions. But most people are angered by what they see as greedy behavior by American corporations.

Unions can help the case for worker representation by taking on whole industries in aggressive multiunion organizing campaigns that focus on the oppressive working conditions in nonunion sectors, said Organizing Director Richard Bensinger, who also previewed the coming Union Summer (**See stories, Page 12**).

The town hall meetings, held over the past several weeks in Portland, Billings, Mont., and Denver (**See stories, Page 4**), are putting a spotlight on the huge wage disparity in this country and producing a record of economic disenchantment. But they also have revealed "a renewed spirit, a fighting spirit" among workers, reported Arlene Holt, executive assistant to Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

"One of the things that is coming out of these meetings is a new commitment with labor and the community, one that is long overdue," Holt said. "We

Continued on Page 10



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Some 500 unionists rally for Detroit strikers outside Gannett corporate headquarters in Arlington, Va.

Workers stick Detroit in Gannett's face

By James B. Parks

Chanting "no scab papers" and "no contract, no peace," some 500 unionists demanded that Gannett Co. negotiate a fair settlement in the 10-month-old Detroit newspaper strike.

"Today, we are seeing the second battle of Detroit," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the crowd outside Gannett headquarters in Arlington, Va., May 7. With Gannett's stockholders and board of directors inside the building, Sweeney declared, "We are prepared to say to Gannett: 'We will fight you in the streets; we will fight you in the board rooms; we will fight you in the state capitols; we will fight you in the halls of Congress. But we shall never give up until victory is ours.'"

Sweeney noted that in 1995, Gannett Chief Executive Officer John Curley made about the same total annual pay as 321 members of the Teamsters local on strike — or about $30,000 a day — while the workers have "endured attacks by the newspapers' hired security forces, the local police, pepper spray attacks, thuggery and a bitter winter without money or jobs."

While workers were rallying outside, union representatives and supporters were inside the building addressing the stockholders' meeting and were met with outright hostility by Curley. They asked the stockholders how much longer they were willing to tolerate the kinds of losses Gannett has absorbed during the strike, some $75 million.

One of the speakers, 13-year-old Laura Ellis, was twice cut off by Curley, once when she asked Rosalynn Carter, the former first lady and a Gannett board member, when Gannett was going to let her striking father go back to work.

The second time, Laura was reduced to tears when Curley snapped at her and would not let her read a statement that implored the company to end the strike so that her "family could get back to normal."

The Rev. Edwin Rowe read a statement to the stockholders from 800 Detroit area ministers that called the use of permanent replacements "morally objectionable and a breach of ethics."

Detroit City Council President Maryanne Mahaffey and Communications Workers Vice President Bill Boarman also addressed the meeting.

Continued on Page 8

Frustrated GOP leaders put off wage bill vote

Unions are attacked instead of problems

By Mike Hall

Ignoring the overwhelming public support for raising the minimum wage, fueled in part by an AFL-CIO voter education drive, Republican congressional leaders tried unsuccessfully to kill the wage increase by packaging it with anti-worker legislation like the misnamed TEAM Act.

Failing that, they put off a vote until later this month while lashing out at those who would give America a raise with a shrill and almost hysterical campaign against the AFL-CIO.

The federation spent $1.2 million during the Easter/Passover recess for an ad campaign calling for a minimum wage increase, focusing on districts where members of Congress, mostly Republican, had opposed the increase. That campaign, AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee told the Executive Council meeting in Portland, Ore., "is the zenith of participatory democracy."

"We are engaged in a major effort to educate voters — union and nonunion alike — about what their legislators are doing," said McEntee, who chairs the Political Committee.

Legislative Director Peggy Taylor described the grass-roots mobilization of union members that accompanied the federation's advertising campaign, saying that public events like the report cards given to members of Congress were essential to the success of the program.

"Those television ads are most valuable when they are connected with the ground activity of your membership," she told the council. "We will continue to plan for these events and activities that we can mobilize around."

The council broke from its May 8 session to place emergency telephone calls to key Democratic senators preparing to caucus on a move by Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) to package the TEAM Act with the minimum wage increase and the popular repeal of the 1994 gasoline tax.

Continued on Page 3

ORGANIZING

Mine Workers reach out

The Mine Workers continued to reach out of the mines and into coalfield communities, using members to help spread the news about the union.

Member-to-member organizing worked in New Haven, W.Va., as rank-and-file workers helped organize more than 180 workers at American Electric Power's Philip Sporn generating station.

Coal miners at Arch Minerals Ruffner mine and Peabody Coal Co. helped put the union over the top at Sporn.

"No one can explain the value of UMWA representation to a nonunion worker better than a UMWA member," said UMWA President Cecil Roberts. "We want to be the union of all coalfield families, not just miners."

"With aggressive downsizing under way in the electric utility industry, workers are looking to labor unions to help achieve greater job security," he added.

Meanwhile, janitors at Defender Services Inc. in Johnstown, Pa., also voted to be represented by the Mine Workers. The major issue, Roberts said, was the workers desire to get respect on the job.

The two victories come on the heels of another member-to-member success story among more than 200 public employees in Gallup, N.M.

LPNs join union rush

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) at the Hebrew Home for the Aged in North Miami Beach voted unanimously to join UNITE, becoming the second group of workers at the home to vote for representation in an effort to improve benefits, wages and gain respect.

The LPNs join a unit of certified nursing assistants, housekeepers, laundry and food workers at the home who voted for the union in March.

"This is a crucial victory for the nurses, and will be an inspiration for other nurses in nursing homes across Florida," said Monica Russo, UNITE's southern organizing director.

UNITE up for count

The final ballot count for a union election at Flambeau Airmold in Roanoke Rapids, N.C., gave UNITE a 96-94 victory.

The company tried to challenge the ballots of three workers who were on medical leave but still entitled to vote. The National Labor Relations Board decided to open the ballots, cinching the workers' victory.

"The company tried every trick in the book, including trying to keep people from voting who had been crippled at work doing their job," said Dean Vaughan, assistant organizing director for the southern region.

Issues included a high rate of carpal tunnel syndrome among workers, a mandatory test to get raises and a profound lack of respect, organizers said. The workers make a variety of plastic airmolded products, such as the insides of tool boxes and Leggos toys.

'Norma Raes' return to the fight

The National Labor Relations Board has ruled that the "Norma Raes" of Pulaski County should be reinstated with back pay to their jobs at CDR Manufacturing in Somerset, Ky.

Besides finding numerous violations committed against the workers by CDR, the board ordered the company to "cease and desist" from threats and surveillance and rescind work rules designed to undermine union activity.

Last October, nine women were fired from CDR for supporting a co-worker who began a union organizing drive revolving around dignity, job safety and fair wages.

"These women have shown a courageous spirit," said Tom Curley, an organizer for the Electrical Workers who was working on the campaign. "They were willing to stand together because they knew that an injustice to one is an injustice to all."

Throughout their struggle for justice, the women have received messages of support from union members through LaborNET, the AFL-CIO's electronic communications network on CompuServe.

"What wonderful news it was to hear that you have overcome such great odds and have been returned to work," wrote Duane Lugdon of the Paperworkers.

"It is heartening to see that there still is justice if we put our knuckles to the test. They are truly a testament to UNION YES!" he said.

CWA works the Internet

A counselor for Concepts for Living, who learned about the Communications Workers by reading CWA's Home Page on the Internet's World Wide Web, was the initial contact in launching an organizing drive that resulted in a 32-5 vote for CWA Local 1040.

The counselors work in five group homes for developmentally disabled adults in Trenton, N.J.

Workers 'go for it'

I gave them the training, said go for it, and they did the rest," said Joanne Smith from CWA Local 3310, who cheered as techs and service reps at Alltel in Louisville, Ky., voted for representation.

The workers were concerned about downsizing, job security, unfair overtime and a seniority system. Smith put the workers in touch with CWA members at other Alltel sites who showed the Louisville workers the union advantage.

Union made them strong

Instead of becoming victims of a corporate buyout, workers at the Salem Evening News and the Beverly Peabody Times fought off a union-busting scheme and voted the union back in.

When the two Massachusetts papers' work forces were merged, management at the "new" Salem Evening News refused to recognize the Communications Workers from the Beverly paper and CWA's Newspaper Guild workers at the News. The workers stayed strong, voting 18-15 for CWA representation despite the anti-union campaign.

USWA wins city workers

City workers in Las Cruces, N.M., voted overwhelmingly to be represented by the Steelworkers.

Not only did the workers pass the 60 percent turnout requirement for a vote, they did it with a 202-17 win. Issues in the campaign included job security, seniority rights and a grievance procedure.

Passing on the turnpike

The Steelworkers won representation rights for 180 administrative support employees at the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority.

The 83-23 victory was attributed to "the desire for more job security," said organizer Donna Blythe-Shaw. "Public employees are facing increased job elimination, contracting out work and privatization. To confront these problems, more and more public workers are choosing to organize, and deal with management as a united group," she said.

USWA also won a unit at the Citizens Ambulance Service in Pennsylvania, where workers voted 71-20 at three sites for the union.

HERE is recognized

The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Culinary Local 226 and the Stratosphere Corp. in Las Vegas reached an agreement on union recognition after more than half the workers signed union authorization cards.

The local will serve as the bargaining representative for 1,350 Stratosphere employees, who work as cooks, maids, dishwashers, food servers, bell persons and slot change personnel.

NLRB certifies UFCW Local 22

The National Labor Relations Board has certified Food and Commercial Local 22 as the bargaining agent for more than 1,600 employees at the Monfort Inc. beef slaughtering plant in Grand Island, Neb.

The certification came more than 16 years after the union first began to organize workers at the plant. Kurt Brandt, an organizer for the local, attributed the win to the determination of the workers, many of whom have worked at the plant for the entire organizing effort.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Richard L. Trumka — *Secretary-Treasurer*
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Ploy to pass TEAM Act fails

Continued from Page 1

Following those calls, senators argued persuasively on the floor in a filibuster that stopped the Dole plan dead in its tracks.

Dole admitted that his efforts were designed to find a way to stop the wage bill. He said his goal was to package the wage increase proposal with the TEAM Act (S. 295) and other anti-worker provisions that unions and "Democrats might not be so crazy about," he said.

"This is his first move to extract a pound of flesh for our successful efforts to make the minimum wage a virtually unavoidable issue for the U.S. Congress," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

Republican leaders stepped up their attacks on unions and their leaders, drawing sharp criticism from some members of their own party. But those pleas to tone down the anti-union rhetoric were being ignored, said Rep. Jack Quinn (R-N.Y.).

On the floors of both chambers, in public statements and partisan "reports," the Republicans have taken a page from the right-wing, right-to-work phrase book to attack "big labor," "union bosses" and "corruption." House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) even referred to Sweeney as "Boss Sweeney."

The rhetoric also was accompanied by anti-worker legislative initiatives. In a letter to Dole, Gingrich said he would package the wage bill with legislation allowing employers to offer "comp" time instead of time-and-a-half overtime pay, along with tax breaks for small businesses.

In the House, Gingrich and other GOP leaders suggested a minimum wage bill be tied to measures that would likely draw presidential vetoes, such as Medicaid cuts or drastic GOP-backed changes in welfare.

In the Senate, Democrats were able to sustain a filibuster against an amendment to repeal the gas tax that was offered to another bill. Democrats wanted assurances from GOP leaders that the TEAM Act would not be part of the deal and that whatever minimum wage bill that emerged from conference would not contain "poison pills" forcing a presidential veto.

But Dole would not give that assurance and on May 15 the Senate turned to other business. But in the days leading up to that decision, Senate Republicans and their business allies mounted an all-out push to move the TEAM Act.

Congressional observers said that while the business community has long been adamantly opposed to the minimum wage increase, they wanted the TEAM Act passed even more than they feared a wage hike.

Business lobbyists "are flooding Senate offices" to round up votes for the TEAM Act, Sweeney said. The bill would change the labor laws to allow management to create "company unions" under the guise of worker-management cooperation committees.

The AFL-CIO has argued that the large number of successful cooperative relationships now in workplaces proves there is no law needed to promote cooperation. Rather, what the TEAM Act's proponents are pushing is an effort to take away workers' right to select their own representatives to these committees.

'Teams smokescreen for union busting'

Hundreds of business lobbyists have been blanketing Capitol Hill with the Big Lie about the TEAM Act, which would legalize "company unions."

They're saying that the bill is only about workers and management cooperating, working together for everybody — something they say they can't do now.

While the discussion of the TEAM Act can often get bogged down in legalese on Capitol Hill, Steelworker Tim Waters broke it down in simple language during recent meetings with Senate staffers.

"They can throw up a smokescreen and call it whatever they want, but the TEAM Act is a way to stop us from organizing," said the 29-year-old former production worker at British Tire and Rubber (formerly GenCorp) in Wabash, Ind. After six-and-a-half years on the lines, Waters spent a stint organizing and is now assigned to the USWA's legislative office in Washington.

"They use teams to fight organizing. When they hear the word 'union,' they get all these teams together and say 'we'll discuss these problems with your team, but we don't need this third party, we're not about to talk to the damn union,'" he said.

Most politicians and a lot of their aides are far removed from the day-to-day life of most workers and can't imagine how teams can be a bad thing, Waters said.

"What they don't know is teams don't make decisions, management makes decisions. In a nonunion setting, it's accepted that whatever the boss tells you to do, you're going to do. If you're a 20-year worker in a place where you have to raise your hand to go to the bathroom — are you going to talk back in a team meeting?" Waters asked.

During an organizing drive at a Rockford, Ill., electronics plant, somebody did just that — and suffered the consequences.

The team was supposed to discuss a more efficient way to place machines, but what management really wanted to do was change the work hours of some employees. They claimed that would make production more efficient.

"He stood up against that, but they had already made up their mind. So he was taken off the team, transferred outside and forced to work on the roof in the winter time," Waters said.

He told the group that no matter what you call it, it's not really a team of people working together. "Management has the ultimate power. They can disband the team at their whim."

— Mike Hall

Family Leave Act causes no strain

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Evidence continues to mount that the Family and Medical Leave Act costs little for employers and gives much to employees.

A report released May 1 by the Commission on Family and Medical Leave characterizes the 3-year-old FMLA as easy to administer, of low cost and usually involving very short leaves of 10 days or less.

The law requires employers with 50 or more workers to grant employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a newborn or newly adopted child; to care for a seriously ill parent, child or spouse; or to attend to their own serious health condition. During such a leave, health care benefits are continued.

"The bipartisan commission's report says what we've been saying all along — family and medical leave is great for workers and hardly makes a dent on employers," said Karen Nussbaum, director of the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department.

"What working people really need is paid leave — and this group of Democrats and Republicans recommended that states look into schemes to provide such paid leave," she noted.

"Those most likely to have paid leave are union members, and the report went to great lengths to note the benefit of paid leave," Nussbaum said. "Labor expects to be pushing for paid leave at the state level."

Only one-tenth of private-sector workplaces are covered by the FMLA, but that coverage includes nearly 70 percent of the private work force. Public employees also are covered by the law.

The report noted that between 86 percent and 95 percent of FMLA-covered work sites reported the law had no noticeable effect on productivity, profitability or growth, and most employers reported no noticeable effect on employee performance.

However, the report said the Department of Labor should do more to educate employees, employers and the public about the FMLA, noting that employers have been confused by the possible overlap of the law with other state and federal laws such as the Americans With Disabilities Act and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act.

CAPITOL DIGEST

By Mike Hall

The House passed and the Senate began debate on Republican budget resolutions similar to last year's Medicare-cutting, education-slashing document that was the foundation of 1995's bitter budget battle.

The resolutions form the basis for "the same damaging budget as last year and should be rejected," said House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.).

The 1996 GOP budget blueprint slashed hundreds of billion of dollars from Medicare, Medicaid, education, workplace safety and environmental programs in order to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and also to balance the federal budget in seven years.

"I can characterize this budget in three words: extreme, deceptive and harmful. The only difference is that they've condensed their budget into six years," said Senate Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.)

The House version kills the Mine Safety and Health Administration, transferring its duties to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and also does away with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the only federal agency performing research on workplace health and safety.

It also goes after federal job training programs and terminates Trade Adjustment Assistance for workers who lose their jobs because of trade treaties.

The Senate bill maintains NIOSH and TAA but repeals the Davis-Bacon Act. Both bills slash the Earned Income Tax Credit that benefits low-income workers. House leaders have plans to include later in the budget process capital gains tax cuts that benefit mostly higher-income taxpayers.

Daschle called it "the most partisan budget in many, many years."

A White House analysis of the GOP budget says it contains "too many poison pills." It revives last year's plan to turn Medicaid into a block grant program while cutting the amount of matching funds states must supply.

That, says the White House, could lead to an even larger reduction in health care than the $72 billion cited by the Republicans, who also seek deep Medicare cuts, including reduced payments to home health care providers and hospitals.

A budget resolution is the first of three-step process. It is not signed into law but is used as a blueprint for the 13 appropriation bills that govern discretionary spending, as well as a budget reconciliation package that covers entitlement spending and tax changes.

In other Hill action:

MARITIME — Legislation aimed at eliminating shipbuilding subsidies worldwide has several loopholes that would allow nations to continue their unfair advantage over U.S. builders.

Approved by the Senate Finance Committee May 8 as part of a larger tariff bill, the provisions would allow nations to continue to pour some $8 billion a year into building, while U.S. shipbuilders receive no government building subsidies. It also would allow other nations to retaliate against U.S. shippers who also engage in domestic U.S. trade protected by the Jones Act that requires goods shipped between U.S. ports be transported on American-built and -registered ships.

REG "REFORM" — The Senate Government Affairs Committee May 15 approved a bill, opposed by the AFL-CIO, that puts OSHA, the Fair Labor Standards Act, Davis-Bacon and such collective bargaining rights as Section 13(c) transit worker protections in jeopardy.

S. 88, the Local Empowerment and Flexibility Act, is quite similar to H.R. 2086, approved by the House Government Reform Committee in April. Both would allow localities and states that receive federal grants to waive these and other key laws and regulations under the guise of "flexibility" for the use of federal grant money.

Neither bill is expected to come to a vote before early summer.

Poignant tales reveal why America Needs a Raise

By Michael Byrne
Portland, Ore.

Liz Clybourne is a registered nurse who works the 7-70 night shift at Kaiser Permanente — seven 10-hour nights in a row so she can get a week off with her children.

For the past two years, she's been working under a "garbarge contract" — a 1.5 percent annual wage increase when the cost of living in Portland is averaging between 3 percent and 4 percent.

"Kaiser is a company that made $20 million over revenue last year," Clybourne told more than 300 people who crowded into the Lutheran Community Center for the AFL-CIO's fourth "America Needs a Raise" town hall meeting. "The CEO makes $313,000 a month, and I'm worried about keeping my house and my car, living just at level.

"Now we may go on strike, which might wipe me out," she said. "But that's okay. I just can't eat the bowl of (crap) that Kaiser is giving me.

"Some people might say I'm lucky to have a job. No. They're lucky to have me," she said to a rousing ovation.

Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka presided over the meeting, which was opened by President John J. Sweeney, who earlier had rallied Kaiser workers for a fair contract and quality patient care.

"If the AFL-CIO is to speak for working Americans, we must first take the time to listen," Sweeney said. Trumka echoed those sentiments with a plea to "help us with your words and your experiences."

Those words and experiences came in one moving tale after another, as the workers described their efforts to find dignity and a livelihood in work. They included:

● Vilaykone Southasarn, who said she was speaking on behalf of her parents, who came from Laos in search of a better life. "They wanted education for us, but they don't speak English, and they had trouble finding jobs.

"My mom has been working as a seamstress. After 11 years in the same garment shop, she makes $6.35 an hour. My mom works so hard," she said, her voice breaking as she choked back tears. "They have different machines now so that she has to stand, just to speed up production. She's always so tired. It makes me so angry.

"She's getting these bumps on her hands," she continued. "It hurts her to go to work, but she has to. I'm living at home to support my parents. They left everything behind. I went to school and graduated, but I have to stay home and help them."

● Alex Specter, who in 1991 had a good union job making $20 an hour as a graphic artist in the printing industry. "Ten months later, they laid me off because my job didn't exist anymore."

Strippers and platemakers had been replaced by computer operators, he said. "I never started to learn computer graphics because I didn't think it would last."

Specter "kicked around and got poorer and poorer. Eventually, I fell into the safety net" — Oregon's Dislocated Worker Training program, one of the best in the nation, although, like others, it is being threatened by efforts by Congress to cut those programs.

"Now I'm in school, learning computer graphics, but I probably won't go back into printing," he said. "There are so many applications, like biotech imaging. When I was laid off, they told me to go back to school and you can be rehired — at $7-$8 an hour."

● Erin Finley, who is working and homeless. "I have a job and I work very hard for the minimum wage, which is $4.75 in Oregon," she said. "But I don't have a place to stay, so I live in a shelter.

"A single person can't live on the minimum wage in Oregon," she said. "I did some research. I make $608 a month after taxes. It costs $412.50 for the average rent, $30 for utilities, $28 for a phone, $43 for a bus pass and $100 for groceries, and then you don't get much. That's $613.50 a month, which means I'm already over budget."

● John Schlittler, who said he and three other openly gay waiters were fired by a Portland restaurant owner.

"I just want to be able to work in a place where I can hug the person I love without being retaliated against," he said.

● Harold King, who retired from a good union job in the pulp and paper industry and then had to sell his house to stay afloat in retirement.

"It was supposed to be a three-legged stool that supported me," he said, "Social Security, a company pension and a private pension savings plan. But now I'm at the mercy of the man I have to pay rent to."

"I know young people who don't make any more than my Social Security check," he said. "That's why we need the Oregon Minimum Wage and Economic Independence Act (which would raise Oregon's minimum wage to $6.50 over three years). I spent my working life working, and I salute this effort to bring America a raise."

● Jeri Sunvold, who left her $12-an-hour job as a baker on the East Coast, and an abusive relationship, to follow her Native American roots to the Northwest.

"But $4.50 an hour was the best I could do, and my training didn't mean anything," she said. "So I got into prostitution and drugs. The pay was good, but I lost my children and I went to jail. I spent a year in a shelter, and I learned that I would never, ever be abused again."

She went to work at a Red Lion Inn and started to organize the workers with the help of Portland's Worker Organizing Committee, but she was retaliated against and fired.

"Now I'm working as an organizer with the organizing committee, and I haven't given up on the Red Lion Inn," she said. "The people of Oregon are red hot and rolling. We're ready to unionize Oregon."



Michael Gutwig/Northwest Labor Press

Nurse Liz Clybourne said she and other workers get no respect for the hard work they do at Kaiser Permanente.

Denver grocery strike is prime example at town hall

By David Kameras
Denver

With workers at most of the grocery stores here going on strike one day earlier, there was plenty of anger May 15 to fire up the AFL-CIO's first Mountain Region town hall meeting.

Picket lines manned by Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 went up at four dozen Denver area King Sooper stores, the state's largest grocery chain, and its negotiating partner, Safeway, locked out its workers. Nearly 15,000 workers are affected, as well as most of Denver's consumers. Together, the two chains represent 72 percent of the Denver market.

Many Soopers pharmacists, represented by Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 2-920, were honoring the picket lines.

In the town hall meeting, the strike was seen as symptomatic of a cancer destroying the social contract between companies and their employees, as worker after worker presented their personal stories of hardship and injustice.

Mary Petteway was among 200 workers who were let go when US West moved their jobs to a subsidiary in Colorado Springs paying half the wages. "That's what's going on with jobs in America today," she said. "I think it's going to take all of us to stop the insanity."

One member of the Machinists who worked more than 22 years at United Air Lines' Denver flight kitchen was laid off, along with 500 others, when that facility was closed. At $6 an hour, she said, she no longer can buy groceries.

Gary Smith, another United worker, reported that the carrier is giving bonuses to 660 executives, purportedly because they, like the workers, gave back 14 percent of their salaries during the recent employee buyout. "Their 14 percent cut was larger than my annual salary," he noted.

Persistent low wages means poverty and the social problems it creates. Several participants representing civic organizations, religious congregations and outreach groups described the revolving door that keeps moving poor people out to low-paying jobs with no health insurance, then back in to the agencies that try to repair the damage when homes are lost and lives are shattered.

Marje Lidalda dropped out of college after her husband died, and her union construction job ("I felt like I was building America") enabled her to provide a good start for her kids. But a disability prevents her from continuing her trade, and now she looks at the $612 a month after taxes that minimum wage jobs offer.

"I'm fighting now to raise the minimum wage," she said. "I'm telling people, 'You have to fight, you have to get together, or this country will fall apart.' "

"I'm here to join the fight against unfairness," added Betty Wilkins, who also was forced into retirement by a disability, and now must find $300 a month for health care.

"The greedy are taking from the needy," she said. "I don't have any money, but with you behind me, I've got power." The audience responded by chanting, "The people, united, will never be defeated."

"Working Americans are losing ground," AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson said at the meeting. She cited the Denver grocery strike as an example of an employer trying to cut back on full-time workers by hiring part-time help. "How can you raise a family on part-time work?"she asked.

Following the meeting, participants marched on the state Capitol to demand an increase in the minimum wage and to denounce a Senate bill that would keep a referendum to that effect off the November ballot.

Between Portland and Denver, the "America Needs a Raise" town hall meetings visited Billings, Mont., where more than 300 workers jammed the Metra May 11. There, they gave gripping and emotional testimony on the stress, strain and pressures of working harder for less and less pay.

Among them was a woman laid off by US West in 1993, who said she returned to school and got a college degree. But after applying for 150 jobs she had to settle for one paying $7.47 an hour.

"The rule now is expect nothing from your employer, regardless of how good a job you do," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka told the workers. "We refuse to sit by and watch corporate America make record profits at workers' expense."

Margie MacDonald of the Montana Association of Churches, who moderated the town hall meeting, said 150,000 Montanans qualify as working poor and, of those, nearly half are the sole source of income in their households.

Workers raise the volume in Kaiser fight

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Kaiser Permanente employees in Oregon and California are injecting new doses of activism in their fight for fair contracts with the health maintenance organization.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney joined more than 800 registered nurses and dental hygienists at Sunnyside Hospital and outpatient clinics in the Portland, Ore., area after the May Executive Council meeting to rally for a voice in the redesign and restructure of health care services for nurses.

Contract talks also are stymied by Kaiser's moves to take away $2 million in benefits for active and retired nurses and to impose a three-year wage freeze.

The nurses and hygienists belong to AFT's Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals Local 5017, and have been without a contract since April 1. Another Local 5017 contract covering 220 technical employees expires this October.

"If Kaiser is to survive and prosper as a quality institution, it must behave more like a quality health care provider and less like an insurance company," said AFT President Albert Shanker in a statement read at the rally.

"The people that are involved in the delivery of health care should be part of the decisions about the restructuring of the industry," Sweeney told the rally.

"Whether it's in Portland or San Francisco or Los Angeles or Kansas City, we are together," he vowed. "We mean business, and we're not going to stop until we win."

Some 3,500 Kaiser workers in Oregon and southern Washington will face negotiations with the HMO in the coming months, including members of Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 and Service Employees Local 49.

Meanwhile, Kaiser workers in California who have been working without contracts for months continue seeking to force the HMO to bargain fairly.

Public hearings on Kaiser's restructuring plans were demanded of the state's Department of Corporations in a petition signed by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Reps. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.) and Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.), various California state legislators, the Service Employees and dozens of other labor groups, health professionals, community activists and consumers.

The company is seeking to close hospitals and clinics, delivering care via referrals to non-Kaiser contractors, shorten hospital stays, move more operations to outpatient settings and limit members' access to care by restricting admissions and standardizing treatments.

"It's hard to believe that Kaiser could contemplate a restructuring so massive in scale without ever asking a single health care worker or consumer for a single word of advice," said SEIU President Andy Stern.

Approximately 30,000 Kaiser workers in the state are without contracts.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Union members and supporters show their determination in a May 6 Capitol Hill rally for nurses.

Nurses stress quality, worker voice

Nurses seized the moment of National Nurse Week to make some points in Washington and garner support in the fight for quality care over the almighty dollar.

Members of AFSCME, AFT and the Service Employees joined with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton on May 6 to open the designated week and call for access to safe and quality health care for all U.S. residents.

At the same time, AFT's Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals was holding a professional issues conference in Linthicum, Md., with quality care featured in sessions discussing the role of state legislatures and building community coalitions.

The theme continued with the release of an SEIU report titled "Demanding Quality," which looked at quality of care, quality of service and quality of work. The study is intended to help health plan purchasers and policy-makers judge the effectiveness of a health plan, the union said.

"The report aims to fill a giant void at a time when HMOs are competing strictly on the basis of cost, and consumers are completely in the dark about the kind of care they're getting," said Rhonda Goode, a Kaiser Permanente nurse from Los Angeles and chair of SEIU's nurse council.

The week was topped by a demonstration at the Capitol attended by some 5,000 nurses and health professionals from AFSCME, AFT, the Communications Workers and SEIU, as well as other representatives of America's working families, members of Congress, consumers and other supporters.

"Our message is that what's wrong with health care today isn't that there are too many nurses who earn too much, it's that there are too many health care executives who care too little," said AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee.

"The real problem is that House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) refuse to stand up to the corporations who profit from it," he said.

CEO pay and the profits of managed care entities are skyrocketing these days, even as insurers are squeezing their customers via shorter stays, stricter controls on access to health professionals and higher premiums, co-payments and deductibles.

Managed care employers are using a dual strategy that involves squeezing their workers as well, cutting back on higher-paid licensed professionals in favor of unlicensed aides, as well as cutting hours of professionals back to part-time levels.

Because hospitals and other health care deliverers have become businesses, noted nurse Kathy Sackman, an AFSCME vice president, the patients have become second to profit.

"The bottom line is the dollar," she said at the May 10 rally.

Dennis Rivera, president of 1199 National Health and Human Service Employees Union, agreed with Sackman. He said with the emphasis on profits, "less licensed, less professional personnel means a less healthy nation."

The nurses urged Congress to set safe nurse-to-patient ratios, limit the control insurance companies have over health care practices and end the replacement of nurses with aides.

They pledged support for the "Patient and Healthcare Professional Protection Act," to be proposed by Rep. Major Owens (D-N.Y.), which would develop guidelines for staffing, create a method to track and analyze patient outcomes and establish an office of consumer advocacy. That legislation is expected to be introduced soon, officials said.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

Unions have legal standing in plant-closure lawsuits

By James B. Parks

The U.S. Supreme Court gave unions legal standing in the fight against companies that close plants without warning.

Comparing their role to that of some government agencies, the court unanimously ruled May 13 that unions could sue for monetary damages on behalf of their members when an employer violates the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, better known as the WARN Act.

The law requires companies to give 60 days' advance notice before closing a plant or conducting mass layoffs. The law allows both individual employees and unions to file a suit if the law is broken.

But some companies and a lower court questioned whether the union had standing under general judicial rules governing who can file a suit. Those rules require that the plaintiff be able to claim direct injury before being able to file a suit.

Justice David Souter, writing for the court, said Congress "without doubt" removed any arguable constitutional limitations to a representative suit by the union as part of the statute. Therefore, the union did not have to show that it, rather than its members, had suffered any direct injury in order to sue for damages.

The only constitutional issue, Souter said, is whether the union could show it had a sufficient stake in the outcome of the dispute to litigate the matter on the behalf of members and thereby ensure a case. He noted that the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act allowed suits on behalf of employees by the Secretary of Labor and by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

"There is no reason to expect that union actions under the WARN Act portend any greater [constitutional] incursions," he said.

The case, Food and Commercial Workers Local 751 vs. Brown Group Inc., began on January 17, 1992, when the company sent a written notice to the international union, not the affected Local 751, that it would close its Dixon, Mo., shoe plant on March 20, 1992, and terminate all 277 employees.

The workers sued through the union, claiming the company began terminating employees after it sent the letter, rather than waiting 60 days as required by the law.

A federal district judge said the union did not have standing to sue and the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed. The circuit court reasoned that the individual relief requested by the suit — back pay and benefits — required participation by the individual employees. Five other appeals courts, however, had ruled for the union in previous such cases.

Renee Bowser, attorney for the union, said the court's unanimous decision in the case was quite amazing considering it came at a time that unions are under attack. The court recognized that Congress saw the union — particularly the collective bargaining representative, such as Local 751 — as the key to facilitating enforcement of the act, she said.

COURTS

Strikebreaker appeal nixed

A federal appeals court has rejected a White House appeal of a decision striking down President Clinton's executive order that would bar government agencies from contracting with companies that hire permanent replacements for strikers.

The full U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit refused, 9-2, to review the Feb. 2 ruling by a three-judge panel that the executive order was pre-empted by federal labor law.

Writing for the court, Judge Laurence H. Silberman, author of the earlier opinion, rejected administration arguments that the ruling was inconsistent with previous decisions that support the president's authority to impose wage and price controls on federal contractors.

Those cases dealt with requirements imposed on all federal contractors, Silberman wrote, not just those involved in collective bargaining.

Asbestos award rejected

A $1.2 billion class-action settlement negotiated on behalf of current and future asbestos victims has been thrown out on appeal.

The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said the settlement in Georgine vs. Alchem, et. al., which was approved by a district court in 1993, was invalid because the case did not meet federal class-action requirements. Particularly, it rejected provisions of the same damages for workers now diagnosed with medical problems related to asbestos exposure and those who might suffer future injuries because they "may not know that they have been exposed to asbestos."

Individuals still may seek damages on their own for asbestos-related injuries.

"We realized before the Court of Appeals' ruling that the settlement of Georgine vs. Alchem was bold," said AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department President Robert A. Georgine, who lent his name to the case. "I am disappointed that our affected members and their families will continue to suffer.

"From the beginning of the case, I understood that justice might have to come incrementally," he said. "Now, sadly, there is a chance it may not come at all."

Caterpillar backs down

After being held in civil contempt of court, Caterpillar backed down May 6 from its standoff with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and allowed agency investigators access to its York, Pa., plant.

U.S. District Judge James F. McClure Jr. held Caterpillar in contempt May 3 for not following an order to allow NIOSH into the plant. The company could have been fined $10,000 for each day thereafter that NIOSH was denied access, McClure said.

The conflict began April 15 when NIOSH obtained a warrant from a U.S. magistrate allowing it to conduct a health hazard evaluation at the plant. The UAW had requested that NIOSH investigate potential health effects from exposures of chemical and toxic metal, particularly cadmium, among workers in the plant's cooler department.

Before the contempt ruling, NIOSH investigators were turned away twice, once on April 16 and then again on April 19.

UMWA wins job rights

A federal judge has ruled that Robert Murray, owner of KenAmerica Resources and Ohio Valley Resources, is bound by the job rights provisions of the national coal wage agreement.

The judge agreed with the findings of William Usery, the union's and coal operators' jointly appointed dispute resolution chairman, that the companies are signatories to the 1993 National Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement and thus are required to hire UMWA members at nonsignatory affiliates.

Under the contract, the first three of every five new jobs must be offered to active or laid-off employees of the signatory company. Using that formula, Usery and the court said, 60 percent of the jobs at KenAmerica's mines in western Kentucky should go to UMWA members.

UMWA President Cecil Roberts praised the ruling as a "major victory" that validates the union's long fight to force the coal operators to live up to their responsibilities under the contract.



Colleen M. O'Neill/AFL-CIO News

Anne Feeney leads a Milwaukee crowd in "Solidarity Forever" as AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney joins in.

Safe jobs fight inspires workers

Workers Memorial Day observed coast to coast

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Workers Memorial Day on the 25th anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Act inspired tens of thousands of working families to flock to some 200 events across the nation.

Nearly 1,000 Wisconsin supporters turned out to rally with AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney in Milwaukee and Madison, while unionists in Alton, Ill., braved tornadoes and vicious weather to remember with AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson those workers making the ultimate sacrifice.

In a special ceremony to mark the OSHA anniversary, more than 20 workers traveled to Washington to participate in a ceremony with Vice President Gore and Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich.

But it was the mass mobilization of people nationwide demanding safe jobs that made the 8th annual Workers Memorial Day special.

Protesters in Bangor, Maine, decried cuts in the federal safety and health budget and voiced opposition to congressional votes to weaken job safety laws. Northeast Ohio workers took a similar tack during a rally in Lorain, and also memorialized workers killed on the job during a special ceremony.

New Hampshire Republican Sen. Judd Gregg received special attention from his constituents for his support of safety-gutting legislation. Gregg is the co-sponsor of Senate legislation that would change many standards into voluntary "guidelines" while incorporating egregious aspects of the misnamed "TEAM" Act.

Philadelphia workers held a mock funeral to remember the nearly 55,000 men and women who died on the job or of work-related causes in 1995, while families gathered for a special service in workers' memory at the Festival for the American Dream in Columbus, Ga.

Bells tolled to honor Minneapolis Building Trades Council workers killed on the job in 1995. Spokane, Wash., hosted a service for workers in that state who lost their lives on the job. And workers gathered in Seattle, also, for a candlelight ceremony at that city's Labor Temple.

Meanwhile, in Portland, Ore., workers took to the streets after participating in a memorial service for fallen workers at St. James Lutheran Church.

Along their march route, they stopped at various places to engage in thematic prayer — Safeway to symbolize those who labor in and around the marketplace; the Oregon Historical Society to recognize past workers; the U.S. Courthouse to envoke justice at work and The Oregonian newspaper to represent the search for truth and freedom of the press.

At 60 New York City subway stations, more than 300 union leaders and members and volunteers passed out literature urging citizens to oppose Gov. George Pataki's (R) workers' compensation bill. The legislation would cut benefits, limit a worker's right to sue and shift $1 billion from injured workers into the pockets of insurance companies and employers.



Macon (Ga.) AFL-CIO photo

Georgia unionists dedicated this memorial April 27 in Macon in honor of workers killed in the workplace.

"I'm happy to report the Workers Memorial Day activities were quite successful," AFL-CIO Safety and Health Director Peg Seminario told the Executive Council during its Oregon meeting. "We introduced a set of materials and tools to people — basic information and the political process — and there were some 200 events that went on, all locally self-generated."

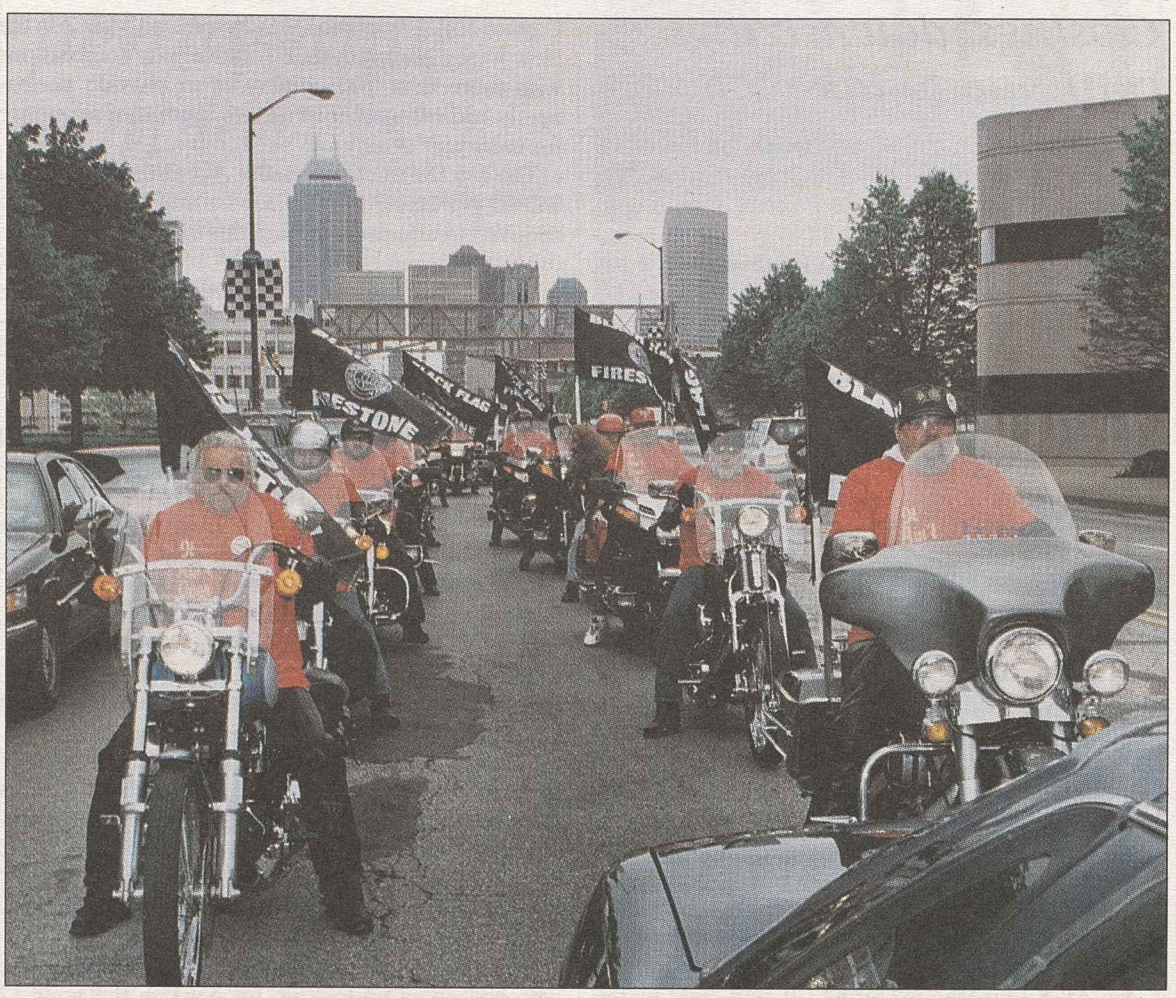
Those remembrances and activities were a powerful reminder to a Republican Congress bent on slashing job safety funds and jettisoning protections to think twice before taking on America's workers.

The message is crucial as Congress turns its attention to the budget process for fiscal 1997, which begins Oct. 1. The Clinton administration's initial request in the area of OSHA enforcement was for less money than previous years, but the administration is said to be revising that figure upward.

Debate on the House and Senate 1997 budget resolutions — the opening step of a three-part budget process — was to begin the week of May 13.

Aside from funding levels, the House measure seeks to abolish the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the only federal agency providing research on workplace safety and health issues.

There has been no movement on pending legislation, specifically the revised Ballenger bill in the House (H.R. 3234) and the "reform"/TEAM Act measure in the Senate (S. 1423) sponsored by Gregg and Sen. Nancy L. Kassebaum (R-Kan.).



USWA photo

Unionists rally on motorcycles in Indianapolis to kick off the Indy 500 campaign against Bridgestone/Firestone.

'Black flag' waved at Bridgestone

USWA campaign seeks pact, workers' return

By James B. Parks

The Steelworkers plan to "up the ante" in the campaign against Bridgestone/Firestone by hitting the company where it hurts the most — on the Indy car race circuit where the tire maker has committed millions to convince consumers to buy its tires.

"We are dropping the 'black flag' on Bridgestone/Firestone, first at the Indianapolis 500 and its rival race, the U.S. 500 in Brooklyn, Mich., in the days leading up to and including Memorial Day weekend," USWA President George Becker told a May 14 satellite press conference.

The black flag is the traditional racing symbol for disqualifying a car for outrageous rules violations, "and we intend to drop it on this company throughout the Indy car racing season — with our bodies and our brains and with a strategic advertising campaign in newspapers and on the radio," Becker said.

The "black flag" campaign will ask consumers not to buy Bridgestone/Firestone products or services, such as tires, golfing equipment, sporting goods or auto repairs at MasterCare centers around the country, until all workers are returned to work with back wages and a fair contract is negotiated.

The USWA and Bridgestone/Firestone have been unable to reach agreement on a contract since July 1994, when 4,000 workers walked off the job. The workers suspended the strike after 10 months. During the strike, Bridgestone/Firestone hired 2,300 replacement workers. At issue is the rehiring of 700 strikers.

"Bridgestone/Firestone is a poster child for corporate greed and irresponsibility," Becker said. "This is an abusive employer who illegally replaced 2,000 workers during an unfair labor practice strike and who has put those workers and their families through 22 months of hell."

The toll on the strikers was graphically presented by three fired workers — Jim Litrell, Edith Marques and Patty Stonecipher, all from Decatur, Ill. They and three other workers were fired for improper conduct after a scab driver drove through a picket line they were walking, hitting one of the other picketers. The National Labor Relations Board has ordered the reinstatement of the fired workers, but the company so far has refused to rehire them.

"It's been hard," said Marques, whose husband returned to work at the Decatur plant in September. "We have four children. You learn how to refinance or spend money real thin. I just want to go back to work."

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, who hosted the satellite press conference at federation headquarters, pledged the AFL-CIO's "full support and participation" to help "bring this company to justice in order to set a new standard for international corporate responsibility."

"We will have several hundred of our Union Summer participants taking part in 'black flag' activities, and I'm asking all of our central labor councils and state labor federations, as well as our national unions, to give top priority to this boycott," Sweeney said.

In response to a reporter's question, Sweeney said the best way to prevent situations such as the one at Bridgestone/Firestone is to elect the "right people in November," who will change the labor laws to stop the illegal firing and replacement of workers.

Becker said the union picked the rival Indy car race circuits as targets because Bridgestone/Firestone is pumping more than $20 million a year into a major effort to win races on Firestone tires and then convince race fans to buy consumer versions of the tires, which they market as "America's tires."

Bridgestone/Firestone's whole ad campaign is a "phony," Becker said, because the company has switched the tires it supplies to Indy 500 and U.S. 500 drivers from ones made by highly skilled workers in Akron, Ohio, to ones made exclusively in Japan.

Becker and Sweeney also lambasted Bridgestone/Firestone for a number of other irresponsible corporate acts, including "carelessly" releasing 877,500 gallons of untreated wastewater from its Noblesville, Ind., plant on Dec. 20, 1995. It also had its British public relations firm write a letter calling the Alabama House of Representatives "un-American" for passing a resolution in support of the strikers.

"We are making all these incidents known to the public as we refute the company's posturing as 'America's tire,' " Becker said. "When will we stop? When our striking workers are back on the job with a decent contract, when Bridgestone/Firestone stops illegally firing and disciplining workers who participated in the strike, and when the company pays the tens of millions of dollars of back pay it owes these families."

The satellite press conference was beamed to Indianapolis and four cities where workers went on strike almost two years ago — Des Moines, Iowa; Oklahoma City, Okla.; Decatur; and Nashville, Tenn., Bridgestone/Firestone's U.S. headquarters. Advertisements also are running in Akron and Fayetteville, N.C.

Railroad board appointment halts TCU strike

Rail workers need raise, Sweeney tells panel

By David Kameras

The White House imposed a 60-day cooling-off period after rail management failed to meet concerns of workers represented by the Transportation Communications Union.

The action, which uses the Railway Labor Act to avert a strike, took place one day before the May 9 strike deadline called by the union to get many of the nation's large rail carriers off the mark after more than 18 months of fruitless negotiations. An emergency board now has 30 days to investigate the dispute and make its report.

"The rail industry and its CEOs have reaped enormous profits in recent years while refusing to even consider a fair wage increase for the men and women whose work makes those profits possible," TCU President Robert A. Scardelletti and Carmen Division President Richard Johnson said.

"Achieving that has been our primary goal throughout this long dispute, and we welcome the chance to present our case to this board," they said.

The importance of PEB 228's deliberations were stressed by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, whose remarks opened the board's first session May 13, the first time labor's chief officer has argued for a rail union before an emergency board.

Workers "are desperate for some re-balancing of the scales," Sweeney said. "They are filled with a profound sense that things are badly out of kilter — that America doesn't work for them anymore," he said. "The No. 1 answer workers give to the question of what is wrong with the economy is corporate greed.

"Nowhere is the disparity between the fortunes of executives and shareholders on the one hand and workers on the other more glaring than in the railroad industry," Sweeney said, noting that while CEO compensation soared 50 percent since 1990 and rail profits gone up up 78 percent, real wages for workers actually declined 10 percent.

Sweeney recalled how the railroads in 1991 convinced a similar board that their industry was on the verge of collapse, only to have all their predictions proven wrong. "The railroads are counting on history repeating itself," Sweeney told PEB 228. "But you have the opportunity to leave a different history."

At issue are wages, benefits and work rules for 34,000 TCU carmen and clerks employed by Burlington Northern-Santa Fe, Chicago & North Western, Conrail, CSX Transportation, Kansas City Southern and Union Pacific.

If TCU's wage goals were granted, the total effect on the carriers' bottom line would be half of 1 percent, the union told the board.

"The contract terms we seek are fair and just," Scardelletti said. "Stock prices have soared, productivity has improved dramatically, executive compensation has skyrocketed, all while rail workers' wages have declined sharply. It's a sadly familiar story in American industrial life, and it's one that cries out for remedy."

The Railroad Signalmen reached a tentative five-year pact May 9. The ratification process by the membership is expected be completed by the end of June.

On May 8, arbitrators imposed a five-year contract rejected by 40,000 United Transportation Union conductors, trainmen and yardmen last month, despite what union President Charles Little said was "clear economic evidence of entitlement of our people to greater wage levels."

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees rejected the National Mediation Board's offer to arbitrate, citing the hasty UTU arbitration decision as a major reason. BMWE President Mac Fleming said the union now has a "lack of confidence in the integrity of the arbitration process" and would turn to a Presidential Emergency Board to argue its case.

BARGAINING

Subcontracting to cost

The Electrical Workers ratified a new two-and-one-half year agreement with Commonwealth Edison in Illinois that makes it more expensive for the company to contract out.

Under the new agreement, ratified April 9, if the company uses a contract employee in a craft department or work group, it must pay all bargaining unit employees in that group a $2 per hour "add on" for all hours worked by the contract employees. The total add-on amount is limited to the average amount of overtime pay in the unit in the last year.

The contract replaces one that expired April 1 and covers 9,300 workers. Subcontracting was a major issue in the talks. The talks stalled in the fall and the company unilaterally implemented a contract Jan. 1. Bargaining resumed later in the year and a tentative agreement was reached Feb. 20.

The new contract incorporates many of the imposed terms, such as signing bonuses of $1,700 for support workers and $1,500 for craft workers, and pay raises totaling 7.2 percent over the length of the deal for craft workers and 4.1 percent for support workers.

Oscar Mayer, UFCW settle

The Food and Commercial Workers approved a new four-and-a-half year contract with Oscar Mayer Foods that raises wages and continues a goal-oriented bonus program.

The agreement covers 2,100 production and maintenance workers at the company's Madison, Wis., plant. In addition to a $1,200 signing bonus, each worker will receive a 15-cent-per-hour raise this year, followed by a 10-cent increase in 1997 and a 15-cent increase in 1998.

Production employees will get another 10 cents per hour this year due to consolidation of 14 labor grades into five. Maintenance workers gained immediate 20-cent-per-hour "skills training" payments and a 25-cent-per-hour "technical needs differential." The bonus program calls for payments up to $750 a year for all plant employees if certain goals are met in such areas as safety, waste reduction, attendance, efficiency and production.

BCT ratifies 'union saver'

The Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers ratified a new four-and-a-half year pact with the Keebler Co. that union President Frank Hurt called a "major union-preserving contract."

"This is a significant victory for this union and our members at Keebler, as we negotiated significant gains without making major changes in the contract," said BCT Secretary-Treasurer Gene McDonald. "The agreement provides job security for our members at Keebler into the next century."

The contract covers 1,800 workers at plants in Cincinnati, Denver, Grand Rapids, Mich., and Macon, Ga. Workers will receive hourly increases amounting to more than $2.10 over term. Pension contributions will be increased in five intervals totaling 56 cents.

Successor language also was extended to include the Grand Rapids and Denver plants. McDonald predicted that after the successful negotiations, workers at the one nonunion Keebler plant in Florence, Ky., would "soon be part of the BC&T family."

RWDSU, Bloomies agree

A new four-year agreement between Bloomingdale's Department Store and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union provides job security for workers who face job loss because of the planned closing of two warehouses.

Under the agreement, some 250 workers at two Queens, N.Y., warehouses will have the chance to be placed in jobs at the company's flagship retail store as openings occur over the next two years. Those workers who choose not to go to the retail store will receive enhanced severance packages. Severance also will be offered to some longtime store employees to free up positions for the warehouse employees. One of the warehouses will close in August and the other in 1998.

The contract, ratified May 1, covers 2,500 employees at the warehouses, the flagship store on 59th Street in New York City and corporate headquarters. The agreement includes wage increases of $1.74 per hour or $65.25 per week over term for full-time employees. Part-time employees will receive increases totaling $1.70 per hour over the four years.

Little change bad news for jobless

Closings, downsizings continue to take toll

By David Kameras

Unemployment edged down in April but was "essentially unchanged" at 5.4 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Although at its lowest level since June 1990, it has fluctuated narrowly between 5.4 percent and 5.8 percent since October 1994, and is still above a pre-recession low of 5 percent registered in March 1989.

"Much of the unemployment rate decline can be explained by a drop in the labor force," said Iain Gold of the AFL-CIO Public Policy Department. Gold noted that employment grew by a scant 2,000 jobs in April, compared with first-quarter average monthly increases of 206,000.

As has been the pattern for years, the goods-producing sector took it on the chin, with manufacturing losing 17,000 jobs in April, for a total loss of 319,000 in the 12-month period. The picture would have been even bleaker had it not been for the return of striking General Motors workers in March.

Feeding the decline is the continuing drumbeat of corporate closings and downsizings. In recent weeks:

- San Francisco's two daily newspapers, the Chronicle and the Examiner, are approaching a merger that reportedly will cost hundreds of jobs.
- Strawbridge and Clothier, as part of its buy-out deal, will close 27 Clover discount stores operated by the Philadelphia retailer, throwing 4,000 workers out on the street.
- C.M. Kemp Manufacturing Co. will close by the end of the year its industrial dryer plant in Glen Burnie, Md., and with it cost nearly 100 jobs.

The ongoing danger to American workers prompted Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) last month to introduce legislation that would disallow tax deductions for interest on loans used to finance mergers and acquisitions. It also includes a provision under which antitrust suits would have to be considered in terms of "the interests of workers and local communities," as well as other anti-layoff items.

"The 'quiet depression' facing American workers is the central economic, social and political issue of 1996," Kennedy told his colleagues. "When the economy is wrong, nothing else is right."

The response to layoffs has not been limited to Capitol Hill. Legislation was introduced May 2 in the New Jersey Assembly that would require corporations with more than 100 employees to provide permanently laid-off workers with two months of severance for each year of service.

The Job Destruction Penalty Act also would levy a $4,000-per-layoff fine on downsizing companies, to be given to affected communities to help compensate for lost jobs and tax revenues.

"New Jersey needs a law that will make corporations think twice before destroying jobs and abandoning communities," Assemblywoman Arline Friscia (D) said. "This law also will provide some immediate help to the workers and communities who desperately need it."

In 1995, according to the New Jersey Industrial Union Council, which is launching a grass-root campaign to garner support for the initiative:

- More than 300,000 New Jersey workers were unemployed — many because of permanent layoffs.
- Unemployment insurance benefits were exhausted by 138,000 workers.
- Only 2 percent of unemployed workers got job-training grants.
- Laid-off workers had a one-in-four chance of finding equal- or better-paying jobs.

"The big corporations and their executives are doing great," declared IUC President Bill Kane. "Profits and CEO compensation are skyrocketing. Yet thousands of workers are being laid off. This is corporate irresponsibility at its worst, and we say it must stop."

In addition to the 7.3 million workers officially counted as unemployed in April, there were 4.5 million working part time involuntarily, and 1.5 million who had given up looking for work in the prior 12 months. In sum, there were 13.3 million workers affected by partial or total unemployment, or 9.7 percent of the work force.

Unemployment in April went up for African-American teenagers (28.4 percent to 31.3 percent) and held steady for white adult women (4.1 percent) and African-American adult women (8.4 percent). It went down for adult men (5 percent to 4.8 percent), adult women (4.8 percent to 4.7 percent), teenagers (17.5 percent to 16.7 percent), whites (4.8 percent to 4.7 percent), white adult men (4.3 percent to 4.2 percent), white teenagers (13.4 percent to 12.9 percent), African-Americans (11.1 percent to 10.5 percent), African-American adult men (10.9 percent to 9.6 percent) and Hispanics (10.3 percent to 9.3 percent).

'Major escalation' on Detroit front

Continued from Page 1

The newspapers' losses have multiplied since the strike began and the AFL-CIO launched a corporate campaign. Sweeney reminded the crowd that "We're here on behalf of these strikers to ask the world not to patronize Gannett-owned newspapers until 2,000 men and women are back at work in Detroit with a decent contract."

As part of the AFL-CIO's corporate campaign against the newspapers, Sweeney has urged union members to support a "do not buy, do not advertise" drive against Gannett's flagship publication, USA TODAY, and against The Miami Herald, flagship of Knight-Ridder, which owns the Detroit Free Press. Gannett owns the Detroit News.

The day after the protest in Portland, Ore., Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, who chairs the Strategic Approaches Committee, told the Executive Council the federation and affiliates have donated more than $1.3 million to help the strikers and their families. He also promised that there would be a "major escalation" of the campaign in coming days to pressure the owners of both newspapers.

Some 2,000 employees of the two papers have been on strike since last July 13 after negotiations failed to produce a new agreement. Management and imported scabs from other papers are producing the newspapers. Hired union-busting security goons from Vance and Huffmaster are delivering the papers.

Striking unions include the IBT, CWA, Graphic Communications Union and The Newspaper Guild.

GCIU President James J. Norton told the rally the strike could be settled if Gannett showed the same loyalty to its workers that it celebrates having with its readers.

Alluding to the unseasonably cold temperatures and dark cloudy skies, TNG President Linda K. Foley warned Gannett's board that those "dark clouds could get darker and darker unless Gannett settles this silly strike. They're losing money. Union busting is bad business," she said.

Another indication of the companies' attitude is its rejection of an IBT proposal to remove from the table many of the proposals the papers said were most objectionable.

"We did that in good faith, in order to move this process forward," said Al Derey, president of IBT Local 372 and chair of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, which represents the strikers. "We are still in the process of reviewing their counterproposal. It appears, however, that company executives have offered very few substantive changes in the demands they first made more than a year ago, which attack the living standards of our members and this community."

The newspapers have lost 61 percent of their paid home delivery circulation since the strike began, the striking unions reported on May 1. Internal corporate documents obtained by the unions, including sales reports and accounts receivables analyses, show the papers are not collecting for hundreds of thousands of papers shipped to company warehouses. The unions said the total weekday paid circulation is down 53 percent and Sunday sales are down by 48 percent.

"We are providing the numbers that Detroit Newspapers has refused to provide," Derey said. The newspapers have twice refused to allow outside independent auditors to verify their circulation claims. "In September of 1995, and again in March 1996, every major newspaper in America provided circulation figures to the Audit Bureau of Circulation, except for the Detroit News and Free Press," Derey said.

Other speakers at the Gannett rally included Letter Carriers President Vincent R. Sombrotto, IBT Secretary-Treasurer Tom Sever and Metropolitan Washington AFL-CIO President Joslyn N. Williams.

Mothers call penny-ante employers

The Food and Commercial Workers sponsored a nationwide protest May 8 at Wal-Mart and Kmart stores to highlight the companies' stance against a minimum wage increase, and to urge consumers to shop elsewhere for their Mother's Day gifts.

Kmart and Wal-Mart — whose employees overwhelmingly are women earning low wages — have campaigned along with their trade association against a proposal to increase the wage from $4.25, set in 1991, to $5.15.

"For millions of working women, Mother's Day 1996 will simply mark another day in the endless struggle to support their children with jobs that pay poverty-level wages," said UFCW President Douglas H. Dority at a gathering in Portland, Ore.

"For all the advances that millions of working women have made over the past 20 years, the majority of women workers remain in low-wage jobs in low-wage industries with little hope for the future," he said. "Women are still exploited as a pool of cheap labor for America's giant low-wage industries like retail."

Dority was joined by AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, who noted that the minimum wage is the wage floor for all workers. "If the wage floor sinks, all wages fall," she said. "A minimum wage increase will help lift all workers, particularly women workers, to living wages — wages that can feed our families."

Some 60 percent of minimum-wage workers are women struggling to support their families — on a wage whose real value has fallen about $1.50 an hour since the 1970s because of rising prices.

UFCW Vice President Patricia Scarcelli urged women to come together and support female minimum-wage workers at Wal-Mart and Kmart, urging that "women must fight back, not with a clenched fist, but with a closed pocketbook. They will not have our consumer dollars to wage war on our paychecks."

Events were held at 50 stores around the nation.

— Colleen M. O'Neill



Michael Gutwig/Northwest Labor Press

Leading a rally at a Wal-Mart store near Portland, Ore., are AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, UFCW President Douglas H. Dority and UFCW Vice President Patricia Scarcelli.

Yale 'People's Graduation' will support workers

By Muriel H. Cooper

Thousands of unionists, community activists and religious leaders will rally May 27 during Yale University's 295th commencement ceremonies, demonstrating for a fair contract for 3,700 Yale employees.

The event is being led by the AFL-CIO as a major show of solidarity for the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Locals 34 and 35, which conducted separate four-week strikes this spring over job security and outsourcing.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, who will speak at the rally, has asked all unions to support the workers, describing their struggle as a "national priority." Several federation staffers have been assigned to work on the project full time, along with members of AFSCME and New England representatives.

The strike at Yale typifies the changing face of today's communities, the employment market and the struggles hundreds of workers and their families are facing. Having lost its once-strong industrial base, New Haven has become the 7th poorest city in the country. Two-thirds of the Yale workers are women or minorities employed in service occupations.

Furthermore, the strike focuses on what has become one of the key labor issues of this decade — subcontracting.

While many workers have lost jobs because their companies began subcontracting for cheaper or foreign labor, Yale has earned a 15.7 percent return on its endowment, and has a record number of applicants for its freshman class.

"Yale represents the extreme of corporate downsizing — a company that is cutting its employees' wages and benefits not because it has to, but simply because it can," said Deborah Chernoff, spokeswoman for the locals.

"And if Yale — a rich university that claims to stand for higher moral values — can do this to its employees, then there is probably no company that can't get away with the same thing," she said.

The rally could be viewed as the final and perhaps most valuable lesson students take away from Yale.

"Students who now are suffering closed dining halls and piled-up trash will, in a few years, be making their own decisions about downsizing and contracting," said Chernoff.

Local 34, which represents clerical and technical workers, began a four-week strike against the university Feb. 7. Members of Local 35 agreed to continue to work and use their monies to help support the striking workers.

The second phase of the strike kicked off on March 27 when nearly 1,200 service and maintenance workers from Local 35 went on strike, while their sister local, which had ended its strike, supported them.

"It was clear that Yale was going to try to starve us out . . . in an effort to weaken the union. We had to figure out a way to outlast them," said Chernoff.

"If the Yale administration teaches its students that workers are expendable, and that a company — even a university — owes nothing to its community, then future workers can expect this lesson to be replayed across the country by graduates of the Yale school of labor relations," she said.

Yale students who join in to support the workers will be presented a PHD — Protector of Human Dignity — from the People's Graduation held simultaneously with the Yale event.

"This disruption is aimed at the rich, arrogant, aloof employer named Yale," said Vincent O'Brien of the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department. "We will be outside of the Yale Yard so they will hear and see a lot of us," he said.

Besides Trumka, featured speakers will include the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson. The crowd will include coal miners from Pennsylvania and employees from some of the most prestigious schools — Harvard, Boston University, New York University, Columbia, Barnard and Brown.

For more information about the protest and rally, call 203/624-5161.

Union members from the Washington area will journey by bus to join the People's Graduation. The bus will leave Washington May 27 at 2:30 a.m. and return that evening. Seats must be reserved in advance. For more information, call Mike Murphy at 202/393-7939.

June boycott of Chinese goods called

Unions oppose extension of special trade status

By David Kameras

Responding to the Chinese government's persistent refusal to stop ongoing and serious violations of human and trade-union rights, the AFL-CIO has called for a boycott of all Chinese-made goods during the month of June.

The federation's Executive Council, meeting in Portland, Ore., May 8-9, noted that American corporations have mounted a massive campaign to once again grant China most-favored-nation trading status, which significantly lowers import duties on goods.

"These companies, and other multinational corporations, do not care about human rights abuses or prison labor," the council declared. "They make millions of dollars by exporting goods from the protected Chinese market to the United States using the cheapest and most exploitative labor — resulting in record U.S. trade deficits.

"We oppose extending MFN to China," it said. "We urge the Congress to recognize the need to send a strong message to the Chinese government by rejecting MFN extension."

In its annual report of human rights submitted to Congress last March, the State Department noted that the Chinese government continues to commit "widespread and well-documented human rights abuses, in violation of internationally accepted norms," and places "severe restrictions on freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, religion, privacy, movement and worker rights."

Chinese officials have "moved swiftly to cut off organized expressions of protest or criticism and detained government critics, including those advocating worker rights," the report stated.

Amnesty International has also criticized China's appalling rights record, which includes:

- Zheng Shaoqiang and Chen Rongyan were sentenced without charge or trial to two years in a labor camp for helping to organize a half-day taxi driver strike in Zhuhai last January to protest high fines for minor traffic offenses and the impoundment of cabs.
- Li Wenming, Kuang Lezhuang and Liao Hetang were arrested in May 1994 in Shenzhen for producing labor rights publications and advising workers of their legal rights. Their fate is unknown.
- Zhou Guoqiang was arrested March 1994 in Beijing after helping to found the League for the Protection of the Rights of Working People. After disappearing for six months, he was sentenced without charge or trial to three years in a labor camp.

The AFL-CIO has consistently urged the U.S. government to realize the inadequacy of its policy of engagement with China, one example of which is the ongoing suppression of the people of Tibet by the Chinese government.

The boycott is intended "as a concrete statement of our support for human rights in China, and our call for American corporations to insist on a minimum standard of decency for workers in China," the council said.

Workers and trade with Europe

Meanwhile, the Labor Department and the European Commission signed an agreement May 2 designed to include labor market and employment policies in a future free trade protocol.

The pact creates a working group to meet once a year to address job training and retraining, active labor market policies, transitions to improve "employability," labor-management cooperation and international developments.

"The costs of doing labor market policy badly are much higher to an economy than they were during a less globalized economy 20 years ago," said Andrew Samet, associate deputy undersecretary at DoL's Bureau of International Labor Affairs.

The pact's adoption suggests "a recognition that labor-management policy is much more an international concern than 20 years ago," Samet said.

Restructuring keys on state, local AFL-CIOs

Field operations move closer to membership

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The revolutionary changes in the labor movement moved closer to the grassroots with the reorganization of the AFL-CIO's field operations and the forging of a new partnership with state and local central bodies.

"This is an exciting time — a time and an opportunity when the labor movement can reshape, rebuild and re-energize itself to meet our challenges. And the place where we will rebuild our power is with the central labor bodies and state federations," said Marilyn Sneiderman, the AFL-CIO's field mobilization director.

"Our strength comes from our members, in every town, city and state in the country," she said. "The CLCs and state federations must be the building blocks and the foundation of our revitalized movement."

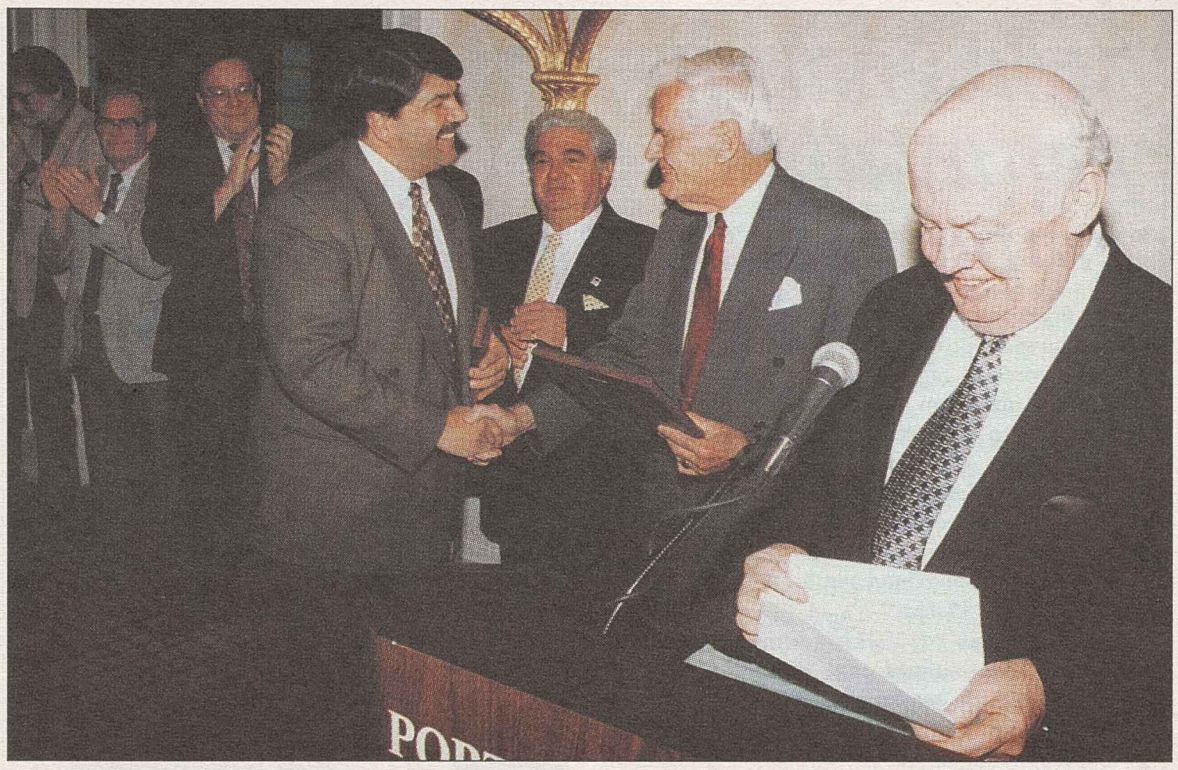
Under the reorganization of the Field Mobilization Department, the 12 field service and COPE regional offices have been consolidated into four major regions, with field directors planned for each state.

The centerpiece of this restructuring is the state field directors, who will work closely with the state and local AFL-CIOs, operating as organizers and mobilizers in such areas as strategic campaigns, organizing, legislative and political action, membership mobilization and coalition building.

"Our goal is to carry out to the field the programs and policies of the Executive Council in a way that maximizes the power of our movement," Sneiderman told the council. "We're trying to do all of this without adding staff, but by shifting resources where they are needed."

A council committee on state and local AFL-CIOs, chaired by Paperworkers President Wayne E. Glenn, will buttress the new department and work on ways to increase affiliations at the state level, Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson said.

"There is renewed commitment on the part of the federation and the state federations to work together in partnership as we move ahead toward our common goals of building and strengthening the labor movement," she said.



Michael Gutwig/Northwest Labor Press

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka congratulates retiring California AFL-CIO President Jack F. Henning after he was honored by President John J. Sweeney at a ceremony in Portland, Ore. Western state AFL-CIO officers, in town for the federation's fourth regional meeting, applaud at left.

To ensure the voice of the state and local federations is heard at the national level, President John J. Sweeney appointed a 20-member Central Labor Council Advisory Committee to advise the leadership on the structure and policies of the AFL-CIO. **(See story, at right).**

This committee will survey the needs of the local AFL-CIOs and make recommendations on levels of support for affiliation growth, leadership development and enhancing community outreach. It also will identify appropriate assistance from the national and state federations for legislative and political action, education, community services and for strike and organizing support programs.

The AFL-CIO also held regional meetings with state federation presidents over the past four weeks, ending with a May 9 meeting in Portland, Ore., after the Executive Council meeting.

The regional meetings focused on the important role that state federations will play in the upcoming elections. AFL-CIO staff and volunteers from affiliated unions are being trained to coordinate political activity, with a goal of establishing permanent grass-roots committees in every congressional district.

The regional meetings were so successful they will become an annual event, Chavez-Thompson said. Plans also are under way for a state federation conference in the fall and a national conference for central labor councils July 11-14 in Denver.

Central Labor Council advisory panel named

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney appointed 20 local leaders to serve on the Central Labor Council Advisory Committee.

Those chosen from larger councils (20,000 and up) are: Stewart Acuff of Atlanta; Amy Dean of South Bay (Calif.); Bruce Colburn of Milwaukee; Joslyn Williams of Metropolitan Washington; Ron Judd of King County (Wash.); Brian McLaughlin of New York City; Cindy Hall of South Florida; and Ricardo Icaza of Los Angeles.

Medium-sized council (10,000-20,000) representatives are: Phil McLewin of Bergen County (N.J.); Anne Flood of Woonsocket (R.I.); Joe Abraham of Flint (Mich.); Donna Lansing of Dutchess County (N.Y.); Becky Hodge of Coastal Bend (Texas); and Pat Lehman of Wichita (Kan.).

From smaller councils (under 10,000) are: Laura Dygert of Yellowstone (Mont.); Rick Tira of Jackson County (Miss.); Calvin Noyce of Central Utah; Evelina Marquez of Northern New Mexico; Ann Flener of Wayne-Holmes (Ohio); and Ed Yankovick Jr. of Fayette County (Pa.).

'America Needs a Raise' spotlight is paying dividends

Continued from Page 1

are renewing that contract so we can take back this country. Unions are being welcomed back into their communities."

The economic message is a key component to the AFL-CIO's political activities this year, Sweeney said, noting that the council committees on politics, the economy, education and public affairs are integrating their work to focus that message.

A task force on economic education is developing a model curriculum and materials to inform union members in meetings across the country, reported Education Director Dorothy Shields and Rudy Oswald, economist in residence at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies.

Sweeney continued his sweeping reorganization at AFL-CIO headquarters, announcing that he is bringing all federation education and training functions under the direction of Robert Pleasure, who will move from the George Meany Center for Labor Studies to the AFL-CIO as an assistant to the president.

Besides the Meany center, which Pleasure has directed since 1985, his responsibilities will include the Education Department and the Human Resources Development Institute. A search is under way for directors of the Meany center and the Education Department, following Shields' announcement that she will retire this year.

The council also got an update on the reorganization of the federation's field services, with closer links to state and local AFL-CIOs **(See story, above).**

The National Labor Center for Political Education, created in January, already has put about 70 coordinators into the field in key congressional districts, with another 30 staff from affiliated unions undergoing training the week of May 13, Political Director Steve Rosenthal reported.

"The goal is to put 200 trained organizers in the field to help mobilize union members to vote this year," he said. "Their work will be helped by $20 million in paid advertising we will be running to focus public attention on the issues important to working families."

The first wave of issues advertising, purchased in selected congressional districts during the Easter/Passover recess, resulted in frantic backpedaling by the Republican congressional leadership on the proposed minimum wage increase, which appears to be headed for a long-delayed vote. **(See story, Page 1).**

Embarrassed by AFL-CIO ads and grass-roots activities, the GOP leaders also finally passed appropriations bills that left worker programs largely intact.

To pay for the federation's unprecedented political efforts this year, unions agreed at a special convention in March to a one-year assessment of 15 cents per member per month. Several affiliates already have sent in their full payment, reported AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee, chair of the council's Political Committee.

In other actions, the council:

- Called for a boycott of all Chinese goods during the month of June, protesting that nation's continuing violation of human and worker rights. The federation said it would vigorously oppose extension of most-favored-nation trading status to China, which should be allowed to lapse on June 3 **(See story, Page 9).**
- Reaffirmed its condemnation of sexual harassment as "an illegal violation of human dignity." In a statement recommended by the new Working Women's Committee, chaired by Electronic Workers Vice President Gloria Johnson, the council called for employers to provide environments that support working women and for unions to educate members about the issue of sexual harassment.
- Condemned the attempt by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to import technical workers from foreign countries, saying that ACOG has not made a legitimate attempt to find qualified personnel in this country. The council also criticized ACOG for classifying Broadcast Technicians as "independent contractors" — "a gross misuse of the classification at the expense of the working men and women of America."
- Praised AFL-CIO Vice President Emeritus J.C. Turner, the former Operating Engineers president who died in April. Turner "was a strong and outspoken fighter for social and economic justice, equality and dignity in the workplace and in the community," the council said.

Workers bringing kids to Washington

More than 50,000 union members and their families are expected to Stand for Children June 1 at the Lincoln Memorial.

The event, organized by the Children's Defense Fund, will be a day of family and community renewal, celebration and commitment to children, CDF President Marian Wright Edelman said.

At the AFL-CIO's Executive Council meeting in Portland, Ore., May 8, President John J. Sweeney pledged labor's strong support for this reaffirmation of America's commitment to children and urged all affiliated unions to participate. Edelman told the council about the event at its February meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla.

The federation is helping organize affiliates' participation and also has provided financial support for the event. At the Lincoln Memorial site, the AFL-CIO plans to have a family forum area as part of a "Working Families" tent.

"America's working families are challenging business and government leaders to help improve our children's quality of life and learning in our communities," said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, who is directing the federation's role in the rally.

Stand for Children is not designed as a partisan event and politicians will not be invited to speak.

— Mike Hall

NEWSMAKERS

Farm Workers Vice President **Dolores Huerta**, a co-founder of the union, has been named secretary-treasurer of the UFW. Huerta replaces **David Martinez**, who resigned for personal reasons.

The AFL-CIO Political Education Department has named **Michael Matthews** and **Jeanette O'Connor** regional directors for the Labor '96 campaign. Matthews previously worked on California's Living Wage Campaign and O'Connor worked with EMILY's List.

The Minnesota AFL-CIO, in cooperation with the Minnesota AFT, is sponsoring a mural project for middle and high school students during Labor History Month. The student artists are using acrylic paints on 10 panels which make up the 40-foot-long mural featuring workers and representative occupations and industries from different regions of the state.

The Harris County AFL-CIO hosted more than 200 Boy Scouts for their American Labor Merit Badge on May 4. The Scouts learned about the history of the labor movement, issues affecting workers and worker rights. Instructors were union members from AFSCME, Oil and Chemical Workers, Food and Commercial Workers, Electrical Workers, AFT and the Teamsters.

AWARDS

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President **Linda Chavez-Thompson** received the Council for the Advancement of Citizenship's Citizen of the Year Award at its first National Citizenship and Civic Achievement Awards Luncheon May 16.

The Sidney Hillman Foundation 1995 Awards recognizing journalists reporting on social justice issues were given to **Fox Butterfield** for his book, "All God's Children — The Basket Family and American Tradition of Violence;" **Chris Kelley** for his newspaper series, "Wither the Cities," in The Dallas Morning News; **Erick Schlosser** for "In the Strawberry Fields" in the Atlantic Monthly; **Hedrick Smith** for "Across the River," which aired on WETA-TV in Washington, D.C.; **Nelson Lichtenstein** for his book, "The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit — Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor;" and The New York Times urban affairs columnist **Bob Herbert**, who received the Officers' Award for Lifetime Public Service. **Sidney Hillman** was the founding president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, a predecessor union of UNITE, which now sponsors the awards.

Maxie Hill, president of Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers Local 1, and **Deborah Meier**, author and president of the Center for Collaborative Education in New York, were honored May 3 at the 38th Annual Eugene V. Debs-Norman Thomas-Michael Harrington dinner sponsored by the Chicago Democratic Socialists of America.

CORRECTION

The Rev. (Dr.) Abraham L. Woods Jr., pastor of St. Joseph Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., was misidentified in a photograph in the May 6 issue. AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy also was misidentified.

RESOURCES

The George Meany Center for Labor Studies' eighth annual Larry Rogin Lecture, **Rocking the Boat: A Tribute to Women Organizers,** will be held May 30 at 4 p.m. Lecturers will include several notable trade union women: Jesse De La Cruz of the Farm Workers, Ah Quan McElrath of the Longshoremen and Warehousemen, Dorothy Haener of the UAW, Esther Peterson of AFT and UNITE and Maida Springer Kemp of UNITE. Call 301/431-5451 for more information.

CONFERENCES

The George Meany Center for Labor Studies will offer its two-week **New Staff Training Program** for new and developing labor union staff and officers beginning June 2. Contact Don Spatz at 301/431-5409.

The first **National Conference on Organizing Asian Pacific American Workers** will be held Aug. 2-4 at the San Diego Holiday Inn on the Bay. Contact Candice Yun of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance at 202/842-1263.

UNION NEWS

NLRB scofflaw sentenced

For the first time, a corporate chief executive has been convicted of felonious contempt and ordered to spend time in jail for refusing to comply with an order by the National Labor Relations Board.

Thomas R. Hochschild, president of the now-defunct Crystal Window Cleaning Co. in Cleveland, was sentenced May 1 to 18 months imprisonment on criminal contempt charges brought by the U.S. Attorney and the NLRB.

A jury found Hochschild guilty of not following a federal appeals court judgment enforcing a 1990 NLRB order. The NLRB had found that Crystal Window violated federal labor laws by illegally firing nine union workers and failing to honor a collective bargaining agreement with the Service Employees.

On appeal, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered the company to reinstate the workers with back pay totalling $639,773 and to follow the contract. After Crystal did not obey the order for more than a year and a half, the appeals court held Hochschild and the company in contempt and ordered him to purge the contempt. When he intentionally disobeyed the order, the criminal charges were filed.

Ironically, Hochschild, who has not yet begun serving his time, has appealed the sentence to the same federal appeals court whose orders he defied.

Harvey's drops mushrooms

The 40-store Harvey's supermarket chain announced that it is dropping Quincy Farm's Prime label mushrooms in support of 85 farm workers the company fired and arrested after a March 14 union demonstration to protest poor pay and abusive treatment.

The company is targeting Quincy Farms mushrooms' main consumer markets covering the states of Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and the Carolinas. A recent ABC poll in Tallahassee, Fla., showed that 74 percent of the public supports the UFW boycott of the Prime label mushrooms.

Carpenters in noncompliance

An AFL-CIO constitution subcommittee has found the Carpenters in violation of Section 5, Article XXI of the AFL-CIO Constitution for seeking to represent building engineers employed by Kiel Center in St. Louis.

The Operating Engineers have the sole right to seek to become the exclusive representative of the building engineers, the subcommittee ruled. The federation will assist the IUOE as the affiliate of favor.

The IBC will be unprotected under Article XXI until the noncompliance is remedied.

NALC blasts Runyon

Letter Carriers President Vincent Sombrotto has called an emergency NALC conference for May 23 "to block irresponsible U.S. Postal Service officials from destroying mail delivery in the United States."

Despite Postmaster General Marvin Runyon's promise to end the dictatorial policies of postal managers and replace it with a new culture, Runyon has made a "180 degree flip-flop," Sombrotto said.

The emergency conference, he said, is the first step toward a national plan of action in all 50 states to mobilize Letter Carriers.

AFL-CIO News to bow out for new publication

What kind of publication does the AFL-CIO need to serve the interests of a labor movement dedicated to union growth, solidarity and social justice?

That is a question we are asking you, the readers, as the federation prepares to retire the venerable AFL-CIO News and replace it with a modern publication that can take the labor movement into the 21st century.

The News already has been supplanted by a weekly FAXed news bulletin called Work in Progress, which also is available on the Internet. You can receive the two-page bulletin in your office early each week simply by sending your FAX number to us at 202/508-6908.

We also will be developing a rapid-response FAXed bulletin for legislative issues, and will be sending along regular talking points on major issues, also via FAX.

The AFL-CIO plans to "refocus its publications resources away from news and toward supporting action, organizing and providing information that motivates," Denise Mitchell, President John J. Sweeney's assistant for public affairs, told the Executive Council in Portland, Ore., May 8.

The change will include "a program to work with affiliates and the International Labor Communications Association to strengthen communications at every level of the labor movement," she said.

To facilitate that effort, a working group of communications directors of affiliated unions has been appointed to work with AFL-CIO staff to help develop the new publication. They are working with a strategic communications blueprint developed by a larger group of union communicators.

We would like to hear from you, the union leaders and activists who are closer to the action, and who know best the problems and the promise that unions face.

You can submit written comments to my attention: AFL-CIO Publications Division, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Or FAX to 202/508-6908.

— Michael Byrne

Organizing wins small steps

By Muriel H. Cooper

Labor has reason to celebrate a variety of recent organizing victories, but with an eye toward the bigger prize to come — new initiatives to ensure sustained growth.

Multiunion drives, campaigns targeted to entire industries instead of shop-by-shop efforts and stepped-up actions by local unions are key, AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger told the Executive Council during its May meeting.

"A central role of the new AFL-CIO Organizing Department is to stimulate debate about resources and the structural changes needed to increase organizing," Bensinger said.

"We need to develop and run large-scale campaigns and joint strategic campaigns," he said. "We need to focus on recruiting women and people of color who reflect the demographics of workers. We need to look for ways to achieve employer recognition more directly. Most importantly, we need to mobilize our members."

To assist those efforts, the council in February created a special organizing fund that is expected to reach $20 million in several years.

The fund will support organizing partnerships between the federation and the affiliates that target large groups of workers. Campaign proposals should target companies, industries or geographic areas of importance and with clear growth potential. Multiunion campaigns and other innovative techniques that would increase worker power in regional or national industries are strongly encouraged, Bensinger said.

Affiliates interested in developing an organizing proposal should contact the Organizing Department at 202/693-6200.

Bensinger said such large, multiunion and industrywide campaigns were necessary in an era where labor organizing is limited by an "antiquated" National Labor Relations Act and traditional representative elections that are too lengthy and unfair to workers.

Local unions can play a strong role, Bensinger said, noting that locals have 70 percent of the resources and the closest ties to the members.

Conferences slated for July and September will focus on the organizing potential of locals, Bensinger said. "The conferences are designed for local leadership to examine how to restructure locals for organizing. We are challenging leadership to shift resources into organizing. This will require a strong commitment from the locals."

During his report, Bensinger listed many recent successes, including the Communications Workers gaining 3,700 researchers; the Teamsters' victories at four Overnite Transportation facilities; Food and Commercial Workers' wins at three Georgia nursing homes; Service Employees signing up home care, hospital and bus workers; and the Building Trades' agreement with Toyota in Indiana.

One innovative organizing success story he singled out was the effort by Laborers Local 78 to bring in 75 percent of the asbestos workers in New York City.

Polish and Latino rank-and-file members went through their Brooklyn ethnic neighborhoods door to door, making 1,600 housecalls in three weeks. The union exposed hazardous working conditions, ran work stoppages and got the community involved in their effort.

"This is a great model and lesson for all of us," Bensinger said of the industrywide campaign that did not involve an NLRB election.

Other major organizing victories include more than 7,000 workers organized by AFT, including 4,252 workers in the San Antonio school district and 913 teachers in Gallup, N.M. AFSCME also has won the right to represent hundreds of workers focusing on group homes in Michigan and New Jersey.

Union Summer is warming up

In less than two weeks, hundreds of young union activists will be hard at work across the country organizing campaigns for social and economic justice in the first leg of the AFL-CIO's Union Summer.

Nearly 30 site coordinators are being trained to lead the venture, which initially will target 18 cities in a campaign modeled after the 1960s Freedom Summer, in which thousands of young people worked in the civil rights movement.

"A lot of the site coordinators are organizers," said Andy Levin, Union Summer director. "They are role models who are playing an essential role in the project and with the activists. We are hoping that they inspire the young people to want to continue being involved in the labor movement."

The coordinators also reflect the changing work force. At least one-third are women and/or people of color.

The activists will be working in health care, manufacturing, hotel, laundry, retail and newspaper industries. In addition, the campaign will send a bus tour through the Deep South to register voters and support ongoing organizing campaigns. A "Labor-to-Neighbor" campaign to educate and organize rank-and-file members will be held in San Diego.

Participants and unions can order a variety of Union Summer items, including buttons, baseball caps, T-shirts, video and posters by sending a check or money order to the AFL-CIO, PMO, Room 209, 815 16th St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006. Please allow a month for delivery.

Blow struck against double breasting

In a case that has major implications for the construction industry, the National Labor Relations Board upheld a contract provision that protects construction workers from losing their jobs to "double breasting."

"This is a major victory for maintaining the integrity of collective bargaining," said David J. Cohen, who was counsel for the Painters, the union that brought the case. "It says if you have an agreement, you'd better honor it."

"This also represents a case of union courage and gutsy union leadership by the Painters and the Building and Construction Trades against politically motivated" anti-worker actions, said Cohen, who is now assistant director of the AFL-CIO Education Department.

The case began in 1985 when a Reagan-appointed NLRB general counsel reversed her predecessor and issued an unfair labor practice complaint against Painters District Council 51 which had struck the Manganaro Corp. to force the company to accept a contract clause prohibiting double breasting.

Double breasting is a ploy used by companies that set up nonunion subsidiaries to avoid union contracts.

Manganaro, a drywall and finishing contractor, had an agreement with Painters Council 35 in Boston and signed a memorandum of understanding with Council 51 when it expanded into the metropolitan Washington area. But it also operated a nonunion company, Sweeney Corp., and refused to accept the double-breasting provision.

The clause was developed by Building and Construction Trades union attorneys in 1978, at "a time when double breasting had become the hot fashion among construction employers who wanted to cut union contracts," Cohen said.

The clause requires any signatory company to apply the union contract to all work it controls and which the union members would usually perform. The then-NLRB general counsel approved the clause as being lawful. But, seven years later under the Reagan administration, as part of the Manganaro complaint, the NLRB general counsel alleged the clause was unlawful.

To date, Cohen said, some 250,000 construction workers are covered by such a clause. The federation and the Building and Construction Trades Department backed the Painters and jointly filed supporting briefs in the case.

The NLRB ruling, issued May 10, says the clause is a legal effort to preserve jobs. It also said that the union did not bargain in bad faith by seeking the clause. NLRB Chairman William B. Gould IV and member Margaret A. Browning voted to uphold the clause while member Charles I. Cohen dissented.

— James B. Parks

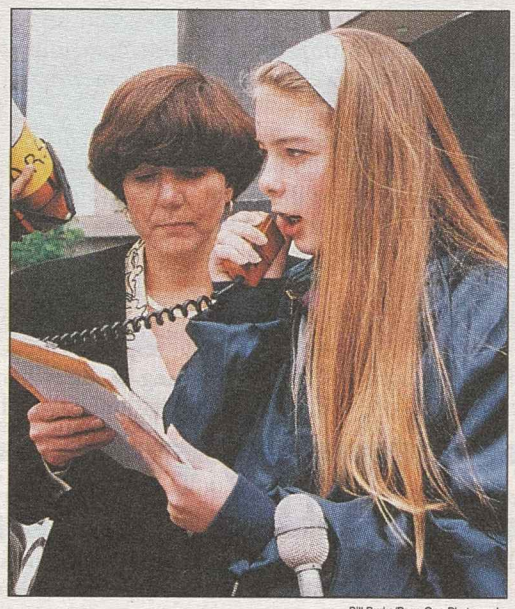
COURTS

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INSIDE



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Newspaper Guild President Linda Foley assists 13-year-old Laura Ellis, daughter of a Detroit newspaper striker, at rally at Gannett headquarters. Laura was prevented from addressing Gannett shareholders. **See story, Page 1.**

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The AFL-CIO does not accept paid advertising in any of its official publications. No one is authorized to solicit advertising for any publication in the name of the AFL-CIO.



These youngsters display the message of the day at a town hall meeting in Washington, one of dozens where workers spoke. **See FOCUS, Pages 7-10.**

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 11 JUNE 10, 1996

Young activists deployed for Union Summer

By Muriel H. Cooper

The summer of 1996 will be remembered as one that made a difference in the lives of thousands of working families and young people who benefited from Union Summer.

The first of three waves has sent almost 500 young activists across the country to help organize workers in nursing homes, the hospitality industry, grocery stores, print shops and government buildings, as well as to work with community groups.

Kicking off on May 31 in San Jose, Calif., Union Summer campaigns are scheduled for Akron, Ohio; Atlanta; Boston; Charleston, S.C.; Chicago; Denver; Detroit; Miami; Oakland, Calif.; San Francisco; Seattle; St. Louis; Washington; and Watsonville, Calif.

By summer's end, six additional areas — Los Angeles; Nashville; Tenn.; San Diego; New York; New Orleans; Sacramento; Calif.; and a Southern bus tour — will wrap up one of the labor movement's most ambitious undertakings.



The AFL-CIO campaign to bring social and economic justice to thousands of American workers and their families is patterned after the 1960s Freedom Summer, when thousands of young people worked in the civil rights movement.

Union Summer is part of AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney's commitment to "rebuild the labor movement and organize at a pace and scale that is unprecedented." It will use strategies developed by the federation's new Organizing Department and its Organizing Institute, which has reached out to young people in an effort to create "a culture of organizing."

The campaign recognizes that unions need to work more closely with natural community allies, be involved with "kitchen-table" issues that concern working families and nurture the desire that young people

Continued on Page 16



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

A violinist plays as Rep. Van Hilleary (R-Tenn.) cries about AFL-CIO ads at federation headquarters, where workers rallied for a minimum wage increase. At center is Legislative Director Peggy Taylor.

Campaign boosts minimum wage

House hears workers; Senate now must act

By Mike Hall

The AFL-CIO's accelerated grass-roots and advertising campaign broke through May 23 when the House voted to raise the nation's minimum wage by 90 cents an hour, despite desperate efforts by Republican leaders to poison the bill.

For tens of millions of working men and women, the 266-162 vote "was a critical sign that finally, working families may be able to gain ground," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

However, the Senate has yet to act. Republican leaders were mulling ways to package the House-passed bill with anti-worker provisions to placate their business allies.

Only hours before the House vote, seven GOP freshmen, who were on the receiving end of the federation's television ads and back-home grass-roots activism, sought to use AFL-CIO headquarters as a backdrop for a press conference denouncing the ads.

But their attempts at guerilla theater backfired when they were met by some 500 chanting workers, who "hijacked" the event, as CNN reported, and turned it into an "America Needs a Raise" rally.

The minimum wage win, said Sweeney, "was due in no small measure to the tremendous efforts of our members in congressional district after district who wrote letters, made phone calls and participated in events to insist their elected representatives vote for an increase."

In a letter to state and local AFL-CIOs, Sweeney said, "Everyone should take pride in a job well done." Along with the television and radio ads, union members staged several minimum wage demonstrations. In San Luis Obispo, Calif., members of the Food and Commercial Workers, Electrical Workers, Service

Continued on Page 5

UFW triumphs with historic lettuce accord

Chavez led 18-year fight that included boycott

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

One of the longest, most far-reaching struggles in labor history has ended with a contract for 450 Farm Workers at Bruce Church Inc.

The five-year accord came after almost 18 years of boycotts, lawsuits, rallies, protests and marches that involved the entire labor movement. The late UFW President Cesar Chavez, who devoted much of his life to the campaign, died of natural causes in Yuma, Ariz., on April 23, 1993, after two days of testimony in a lawsuit related to the strike.

The farm workers, who pick the company's Red Coach lettuce mostly in Salinas Valley, Calif., were led out on strike by Chavez in 1979. The AFL-CIO national boycott that Chavez championed won the support of 10 national supermarket chains that stopped carrying Red Coach lettuce.

Together for the May 29 contract signing, in the heartland of the state's agricultural region, were UFW President Arturo S. Rodriguez — Chavez's son-in-law — and BCI Chief Executive Officer Steve Taylor, whose father fought Chavez and the UFW in the courts of justice and public opinion for almost two decades.

"The greatest monument to Cesar Chavez . . . is seen in the union contract we sign today with Bruce Church," Rodriguez said. "Today's ceremony affirms that Cesar's dream of democracy and collective bargaining for farm workers is alive and well."

Rodriguez looked back at the historical significance of the day, and looked ahead at what he predicted would be a good relationship with BCI. Under Taylor, he said, the company was "willing to sit down and honestly deal with the issues affecting the company's workers."

The pledge to Bruce Church and the rest of California's agricultural industry, Rodriguez added, is to help growers with their problems once they are willing to recognize that farm workers need and deserve the security union contracts bring.

Continued on Page 6

ORGANIZING

IBEW drive is catching

Helped by workers' concerns about job security, seniority and an impending merger, the Electrical Workers signed up the majority of nonclerical workers of Baltimore Gas and Electric Co.

The National Labor Relations Board's Baltimore office opened hearings May 30 on certifying IBEW Local 1900's petition before scheduling an election.

"The workers were concerned about seniority, company practices changing all the time and having no say on the job," said Gary Neald, the IBEW representative who worked for two years on the organizing drive. "We had to have 30 percent of the workers to petition for an election, and we've got more than that — more than enough to win."

Neald said BG&E's clerical workers also have asked for help because of the company's announcement earlier this year that it will merge with Washington-based Potomac Electric Power Co. (PEPCO), which is unionized.

BG&E is taking a hard line against the union, and already has gained a one-week delay in the NLRB hearing.

New vote at Toma-Tek

Workers at the Toma-Tek tomato processing plant in the San Joaquin Valley vowed to beat the company in a new election this summer, following the final count of last year's disputed balloting.

Although the National Labor Relations Board count indicated that the Teamsters lost on a 263-263 tie, the company already had signed an agreement committing itself to a new election in the event the company won.

The agreement was signed in March at the insistence of the NLRB because of a campaign of harassment, firings and intimidation by the company against the workers during last summer's election. The IBT also is filing a lawsuit against several top managers of the plant, charging them with violating the civil rights of their employees and conspiring with a local police officer to deprive workers of their federally protected right to union representation.

Fleming votes for IBT

Bolstered by rank-and-file Teamsters organizers from Fleming Food plants in Oklahoma City and Houston, and the determination not to be bullied by their managers, Fleming workers at the Warsaw, N.C., plant voted for representation by Teamsters Local 391.

The victory came after a two-year company anti-union campaign marked by racial and sexual harassment. The company also fired an employee who supported the union, threatened to close the plant in the event of a union win and employed off-duty local law enforcement personnel to watch workers.

The initial election, held last July, was overturned by the NLRB because of company misconduct and intimidation of workers.

"Fleming threw everything in their dirty bag of tricks at these workers — and the workers still voted for better wages and benefits and improved working conditions," said IBT President Ron Carey.

UNITE at nursing home

Employers at Fountainhead Nursing Home in North Miami voted to join UNITE by a 2-1 margin.

"Fountainhead workers finally won the respect they deserve," said Handel Lundy, a UNITE organizer. "Workers are fed up with the way management treats them at Fountainhead, and they proved today that they aren't going to take it anymore."

Issues during the campaign included low wages and benefits, exorbitant costs for health insurance and lack of respect.

It was the fourth nursing home election since UNITE launched the Florida Nursing Home Campaign for Justice in March.

Thumbs up for IUE

What began as shooting the breeze at a barbecue last summer ended with 224 employees of the Parkway School District in St. Louis voting for representation by the Electronic Workers.

A school district employee complained about wages, insurance and favoritism to Gary Hodges, president of IUE Local 823. That prompted Hodges to recruit some volunteer organizers for the drive.

"I just feel the union had done so much for me over the past 19 years that I would like to share the benefits of the union with others," he said.

AFSCME for home care

Members of AFSCME District Council 1707 added 710 home care workers from New York City to its membership, as Metrocare employees voted 303-33 to join the council. Metrocare, a proprietary care agency, is funded primarily from Medicare and Medicaid contracts.

SEIU on a roll

A campaign by Service Employees Local 509 to organize mental health and retardation facilities in Boston scored its fourth victory since April when 120 community care workers employed by CASPAC voted to join SEIU.

In San Francisco, a unit of emergency medical technicians and paramedics employed by AMR voted unanimously to join SEIU Local 250, following an AMR unit win in Marin County.

BRS comes out on top

Locomotive mechanics on the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad voted overwhelmingly for representation by the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen.

"It is encouraging to gain new members from the regional railroads such as the W&LE, and we welcome them to the BRS," said W.D. "Dan" Pickett, president of the union.

— Compiled by Murial H. Cooper

Governing rule: Work with workers

If state and local governments want to reduce costs and improve quality and services, they should involve workers through collective bargaining, a U.S. Department of Labor task force concluded in its final report.

"Employees usually know the most about how to get a job done," said Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, who created the Task Force on Excellence in State and Local Government Through Labor-Management Cooperation.

The panel's report, "Working Together for Public Service," lists respect for the role of unions among 11 steps for implementing workplace partnerships in the public sector. The task force also cited the importance of employment security and changed roles for labor and management in collective bargaining relationships.

Good collective bargaining relationships produce fewer grievances and quicker agreements, the task force found. Under these circumstances, contracts usually were shorter, more flexible and focused on service responsibilities.

The report offers "conclusive evidence that collective bargaining and the right of employees to select their own representatives are crucial to the attainment of the high-performance workplace," AFL-CIO Public Employee Department President Al Bilik told the 8th Annual Labor-Management Conference.

The panel also urged leadership commitment to workplace partnerships and flexibility by both labor and management. The report noted that absenteeism, time-loss injuries and overtime often are reduced signficantly when labor-management cooperation is present.

Reforms that emerge from employee participation usually produce equal or better quality and cost results than contracting out, the report says.

"The AFT has found from experience that contracting out does not result in either lower costs or better services," AFT Secretary-Treasurer Edward J. McElroy Jr. said in a statement on the report.

The report is the culmination of a yearlong examination of cooperative efforts launched Oct. 19, 1994, consisting of seven two-day hearings in Washington and five two-day field hearings. Mandated by Reich to investigate the current state of cooperation in state and local government, the task force also addressed a series of questions on productivity, innovation and risk-taking.

Co-chaired by former New Jersey Gov. Jim Florio and Mayor Jerry Abramson of Louisville, Ky., the task force was composed of labor leaders, elected officials and academics. The labor contingent included Bilik; Kent Wong, president of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance; Ken Young, former executive assistant to AFL-CIO President Emeritus Lane Kirkland; and Mary Hatwood Futrell, former president of the National Education Association.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Marianne Keffer Zweig/Page One Photography

These AFSCME marchers were among tens of thousands of unionists Standing for Children.

Working families elevate children

Working families struck a blow for themselves and their future when more than 200,000 gathered in Washington June 1 to Stand for Children.

The rally was called by Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund to reaffirm the nation's commitment to its youth — from families to schools to government policies.

Labor made sure no one missed the connection between standing for children and standing for workers, bringing a contingent of more than 30,000 union members and their families in colorful T-shirts, wearing pins and bearing signs proclaiming "America Needs a Raise" and "AFL-CIO Stands for Children."

Unions were proud and ready to "stand for children," said Marc Baldwin, who coordinated the event for the federation. "I got calls from a Letter Carriers local in Colorado, the state federations in Wisconsin and Minnesota, a FAX from the Los Angeles AFL-CIO — pick a place and something good was happening there."

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney mingled with the crowd and led a labor contingent in a march from the Ellipse to the Lincoln Memorial, along with AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee and Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy, National Health and Human Service Employees Union (1199) President Dennis Rivera, AFT Secretary-Treasurer Edward J. McElroy Jr., Office and Professional Employees President Michael Goodwin, School Administrators President Joe L. Greene and UNITE Executive Vice President Edgar Romney. Dozens of other labor leaders were in the crowd.

The festive atmosphere was accented with AFSCME's green shirts, the OPEIU's sky-matching blue togs, the Teamsters' yellow attire, UNITE's red shirts and distinctive headgear worn by the 1199 contingent from New York. The Musicians added a touch of class with a Dixieland jazz band that played for two hours in the hot sun.

Some 28,000 "America Needs a Raise" pins were distributed, along with 10,000 signs sprinkled throughout the crowd, held by union and nonunion folks alike. In addition, unionists served as volunteers in many capacities, including staffing an information table in the "Family Forum" area, and labor contributed financially to offset the costs of the day.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

Sweatshops, child labor get airing

Retailers Eddie Bauer, J. Crew and Kmart are selling clothes made by underage Honduran workers, according to a new report by the National Labor Committee, a labor and human rights group that last month blew the whistle on Wal-Mart's Kathie Lee line.

The Labor Department also tagged J.C. Penney, Macy's East, Specialty Retailers Inc., Charlotte Russe and Claire's Boutiques as receiving goods from a contractor cited for repeated wage-and-hour violations.

"There are too many contractors in the industry who make skimming the wages of their workers a regular business practice," said Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich.

The flurry of reports brought new attention to the abuse of workers in the garment industry and put many U.S. retailers on the defensive. When news reports turned up a New York sweatshop making "Kathie Lee" clothing where workers had not been paid, Kathie Lee Gifford's husband, Frank, tried to pay the workers. Kathie Lee Gifford also announced she would mount a campaign against child labor.

UNITE President Jay Mazur praised Gifford's efforts, noting that she "has been caught up in this system that is out of control. She responded as all decent Americans have responded to these heartbreaking stories of women and children forced to work under the most degrading conditions — with shock and a willingness to try to fix the system."

Mazur also welcomed a bipartisan proposal by New York Gov. George Pataki (R) to make retailers assume responsibility for the conditions under which the goods they sell are produced.

At a news conference on Capitol Hill, Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) urged U.S. companies to voluntarily adopt a "no sweat" label, certifying that products sold in the United States were made without child labor, in an effort to raise consumer awareness.

"This problem goes beyond Kathie Lee Gifford and Wal-Mart," said Miller. "Every day, American consumers unknowingly purchase products made with child and other exploited labor. If consumers had more information, they may change their purchasing habits."

Grocery strike for job security wins support

By James B. Parks

Striking and locked-out workers at two of Colorado's largest grocery chains are gaining support from other workers and the community as more people understand the implications of the companies' efforts to take away jobs.

Talks between Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 and King Soopers and Safeway supermarkets reached an impasse May 29. No new talks are scheduled.

About 9,000 retail and meat workers struck King Soopers supermarkets in the Denver and Colorado Springs area May 14 after negotiations failed. Safeway, which is bargaining jointly with Soopers, locked out about 4,000 of its workers the next day.

Some 617 employees of Safeway stores in northern Colorado went on strike June 2 after contracts expired for retail workers at nine stores. Contracts for meatcutters at the nine stores expire June 15 and June 22. Some of the meatcutters are honoring the strikers' picket lines. Many Soopers pharmacists, represented by Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 2-920, and truck drivers and warehousemen represented by three Teamster locals, also are honoring the pickets.

Community support for the strikers has remained strong. The union estimates that the stores have lost about 60 percent of their customers since the strike began.

"The impasse is Wall Street vs. the workers of Denver," said Blair Gifford, professor of management at the University of Colorado at Denver. "Consumers realize that the strike really is about downsizing," he said. "Their behavior represents a bit of consumer backlash against downsizing and a reaffirmation of labor unions."

Meanwhile, the Colorado Labor Department ruled June 3 that locked-out workers at Safeway can receive unemployment insurance benefit payments. Safeway argued the workers should not be eligible for unemployment insurance because they were members of Local 7 and knew they would be locked out when their fellow workers walked out. The company plans to appeal the ruling.

Both chains hired temporary replacement workers and brought in strike-breaking security guards from Falcon Global Corp. to spy on the strikers. Together, the two chains represent 72 percent of the Denver market. King Soopers is owned by Cincinnati-based Kroger Co. Safeway is based in Oakland, Calif.

The main issue is job security. After posting combined profits of $629 million in 1995, the two companies are demanding major changes in the agreement that would cut union jobs by allowing vendors to stock shelves, and to contract out services such as sanitation and maintenance.

Management also wants the right to bring in more prepackaged meats and to reduce the working hours of full-time employees to meet "customer shopping patterns." It also wants to open new stores without being required, as they are now, to fill 60 percent of the new jobs with union members.

"These are gut-wrenching issues for us and unacceptable as written," said Gary Hakes, president of Local 7. "We told them we were willing to discuss and compromise on all areas of their proposal that do not directly eliminate jobs or work," he said. No new talks are scheduled.

The demands for vendor stocking, prepackaged meats and subcontracting would eliminate hundreds of jobs, Hakes said. It takes as long as 13 years for Soopers and Safeway employees to reach full-time status, he said, and the union will not agree to any proposal that would reduce full-time jobs.

The companies also have proposed a two-tier health insurance system, with new employees and future retirees receiving lower benefits. Company contributions to the pension fund also would be reduced.

The union has filed unfair labor practices charges against Soopers for the firing of several strikers including two picket-line captains for "picket-line misconduct." The union claims they were fired for making disparaging remarks about the company. "They're singling out strong union employees to get them off the premises," said union attorney Ernest Duran Jr.

AFL-CIO denounces favored trade status for China

By David Kameras

The AFL-CIO condemned efforts by the Clinton administration to extend most-favored-nation trading status to China, which continues to abuse human and worker rights even as it flouts international trade rules.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney called the White House's decision to seek a waiver of legal requirements to extend MFN to China "a gross misunderstanding of recent history."

"U.S. multinational companies, the force behind MFN extension, have invested billions of dollars in China, transferring not only capital but valuable technology and goods," Sweeney noted. "Using oppressed Chinese labor, they are establishing or contracting with manufacturing export centers that will rival U.S. production.

"Companies support for MFN extension is about protecting those investments, and not about expanding U.S. exports or promoting democracy," he said.

In testimony before two separate Senate committees, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka pointed out that the federation has opposed MFN for China under both Republican and Democratic administrations. There is good reason, he said, that strong bipartisan opposition to MFN has continued since it was first granted 15 years ago.

That opposition "is based on China's continued denial of basic worker and human rights, and a nonreciprocal, unfair trading relationship that is harmful to U.S. workers," Trumka told the Senate Finance and Foreign Relations committees.

Access for U.S. goods continues to be unfairly restricted in the Chinese market and intellectual property rights and textile agreements are violated, he said. China bans independent unions and is violating an earlier understanding with the United States by tolerating the production and export of goods produced in the Laogai, its prison forced-labor system.

"Despite 15 years of accommodation, there is nothing to suggest that China is now willing to act in accordance with international trading rules or basic democratic principles," Trumka said.

"A new approach is needed that secures a reciprocal, nondiscriminating trading relationship and supports those working toward the emergence of a free and democratic China," Trumka told the senators.

The Executive Council last month called for a boycott of all Chinese-made goods during June.

Meanwhile, the AFL-CIO has welcomed a report endorsed by finance and foreign ministers at a May 21 meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that makes clear the links between trade and labor standards, while arguing that the suppression of labor standards does not yield trade advantages over time.

The report identifies a set of core labor standards that it says are "universal" and widely recognized to be of "particular importance": freedom of association, the right to collectively bargain, prohibition of forced labor, nondiscrimination in employment and the prevention of exploitative child labor.

In addition, the report says the World Trade Organization's trade policy review mechanism could be extended to include labor standards without renegotiating or amending WTO articles.

The federation has called on the administration to follow through on its commitment toward creating a WTO permanent working party on international labor standards at the trade body's December ministerial meeting in Singapore.

OECD ministers also heard that member countries are deficient in providing their workers with training to cope with changing economies.

"Skill thresholds for jobs are rising, unskilled and low-skilled jobs are becoming scarcer (and) youth unemployment rates remain unacceptably high in many countries," the report on jobs strategy stated.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Letter Carriers President Vincent R. Sombrotto addresses NALC members at emergency conference.

NALC prepares for Postal Service fight

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

More than 2,000 Letter Carriers converged on Washington May 23 for an emergency conference to develop a national plan of action to block Postmaster General Marvin Runyon's "path of self-destruction."

"The postmaster general clearly is guiding the Postal Service on a path of self-destruction that can only lead to higher postage rates, lower productivity and poorer service to American homes and businesses," said NALC President Vincent R. Sombrotto to resounding applause. "But we're not going to back down. We will leave no stone unturned."

The crowd was so large that the union had to switch from the Washington Hilton Hotel to the larger Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill.

NALC members and leaders offered several suggestions for the national plan, including national picketing, paid advertising to educate the public, a national rally, a letter-writing campaign, the formation of a coalition with other unions, work to rule and a call for Runyon's resignation. The union will begin its nationwide picketing on June 19.

Meanwhile, the Postal Workers also are gearing up for national protests against Runyon and USPS policies. APWU President Moe Biller announced the union will demonstrate July 1, the union's 25th anniversary and the USPS's 25th anniversary as an independent federal agency.

Prior to coming to the USPS, Runyon was called "Carvin' Marvin" at the Tennessee Valley Authority, where he slashed 14,000 out of 35,000 jobs. Runyon's recent actions at the USPS have included implementing a new automated process for preparing mail for carriers' routes that often has resulted in delayed delivery, and unilaterally ending the NALC's 14-year-old Employee Involvement process.

During a May 14 speech to the Direct Marketing Association, Runyon also blamed the need for a postal rate increase on the "outrageous amount" of money the USPS pays in wages and benefits.

This attack on workers' wages and benefits came one week after Runyon asked the Postal Service Board of Governors for a $1.5 million retirement bonus when he leaves the USPS.

"This amounts to a platinum parachute," Sombrotto said. "But we are going to make sure he leaves without his parachute."

The USPS also is implementing a century-old Draconian network of spies on letter carriers as they deliver mail along their routes. Sombrotto said an internal Postal Service memo showed the Postal Inspection Service plans "a national review of street management practices in city delivery offices in the near future," a process tantamount to spying on the carriers.

"You are being watched on the street far more than in the past," NALC's Director of City Delivery James L. Edgemon warned the letter carriers.

The objectives of the spying, the USPS memo said, include determining whether enough discipline has been meted out against carriers and whether local postmasters are sufficiently tough in monitoring the street hours of city carriers.

"This Postal Service adventure is nearly a carbon copy of what the old Post Office Department had done exactly 100 years ago when the Secret Service was used to spy on letter carriers while they did their jobs," Sombrotto told the workers.

The conference was the first step by the union for a national plan of action throughout all 50 states to galvanize postal employees and the general public against Runyon's tactics.

Sweeney: Union strength can lift disabled workers

By James B. Parks
Detroit

A strong labor movement is essential to ending the disproportionate harm to people with disabilities caused by business policies that disrespect workers and line the pockets of the wealthy, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told a President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities conference.

"Workers with disabilities have suffered greatly the consequences of 'global competition' in far greater numbers than other workers," Sweeney said.

"They are first in line for layoffs, last in line for raises. And all too often, when workers become disabled or are injured on the job, employers take the low road, refuse to provide reasonable accommodations and place the employee on worker's compensation," he said.

Since 1973, median earnings in the United States have fallen by about 15 percent, and the bottom 20 percent have fallen behind the most.

"You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out what this trend has meant to families struggling with disabilities — it means less money for medical care not covered by insurance, less money for personal care assistance, less money for special foods, accessible housing, transportation and special clothing," Sweeney declared.

The plight of workers with disabilities is part of the general trend toward concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, massive layoffs and budget cuts that pull away the "safety nets, wage standards, regulatory enforcement and income protections working families depend on most," he added.

To change the situation, Sweeney said, organized labor must regain its ability to organize, to strike and to win political elections "so we can hold employers accountable, fight discrimination in the workplace and preserve and enforce laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"The weakness of labor encouraged employers to take the low road," he said. "Unless the American labor movement, with your help, can stop current corporate trends, there will be very few jobs for which workers with disabilities can apply. And those who are currently employed, whether disabled or not, will be vulnerable to downsizing and mergers."

At the same time, American business must change the way it does business. "We need to get back to basic values like responsibility and loyalty: when a company is doing well and making profits, it should raise wages; when workers have been loyal and worked hard, the company shouldn't abandon them," Sweeney said.

Workers prevail as House votes wage increase

AFL-CIO turns table at GOP news conference

Continued from Page 1

Employees and Laborers held a press conference in front of a local supermarket, filling a shopping cart with $40 worth of food — the amount a worker could buy for the family each week with the raise.

The message was lost on Rep. Andrea Seastrand (R-Calif.), however, as she voted against giving workers a spare $40 a week for food.

In Tacoma, Wash., some 100 unionists rallied for a minimum wage increase and then marched on a fund-raising event for Rep. Rick White (R-Wash.) that included an appearance by House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.). White voted against the raise.

Other events took place in Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Oregon and Pennsylvania.

Joining the majority in voting to raise the minimum wage were nearly half of the 29 members of Congress the AFL-CIO had targeted for previously voting against the measure. Of the seven Republican freshmen who came to the AFL-CIO to denounce the ads, one — Van Hilleary (Tenn.) — voted for the minimum wage increase.

The victory came after last-ditch attempts by Republican leaders to scuttle the bill, including one amendment that would have exempted tens of thousands of small businesses employing some 10 million workers from minimum wage and overtime laws.

The amendment offered by Rep. William F. Goodling (R-Pa.) was described as a "poison pill" by President Clinton, who threatened to veto any wage bill that contained such an exemption. But that was the hope of some GOP leaders — vote to increase the minimum wage but make other provisions so unpalatable that it would draw a veto.

"This minimum wage vote should be called the Gingrich two-step," said Rep. Charles "Bud" Schumer (D-N.Y.), referring to the House Speaker. "Take one step forward by raising the minimum wage for some people and take two giant steps backward by exempting millions from overtime and minimum wage laws altogether."

The proposed exemption "is stunning in its scope and impact. . . This would be the most far-reaching small business exemption from wage standards ever enacted into law," AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor said in a letter to House members.

All but seven Democrats were joined by 43 Republicans in defeating the small business exemption. However, another Goodling amendment passed, 239-188. It would freeze the portion of the minimum wage employers must pay workers who make most of their money from tips, limit the overtime earnings of computer workers and establish a 90-day subminimum wage for workers under 20.

"We will have to fight hard to eliminate these provisions in the Senate bill," Sweeney said. If passed and signed into law, the minimum wage would increase 50 cents an hour July 1 and an additional 40 cents an hour July 1, 1997.

In the week leading up to the vote, the AFL-CIO campaign targeted 29 districts for television and radio ads and special events to highlight the representatives' continued stance against a raise.

The ads struck a raw nerve in the GOP targets. Several Republican representatives wrote to television stations in their districts urging that the AFL-CIO's ads be pulled, claiming they were false. Some of those letters contained thinly veiled threats of federal investigations if the stations aired the ads. But only five of 112 stations pulled the ads.

The spots said the minimum wage has been $4.25 an hour since 1991 and since then corporate profits and executive pay has skyrocketed. Congressional pay has jumped 30 percent.

"But our congressman voted five times to block a minimum wage increase. And that's after he voted to cut Medicare and college loans, all to give a big tax break to the rich," the ads stated.

The ads refer to several votes earlier this year in the House to block consideration of a minimum wage increase and to budget votes in 1995.

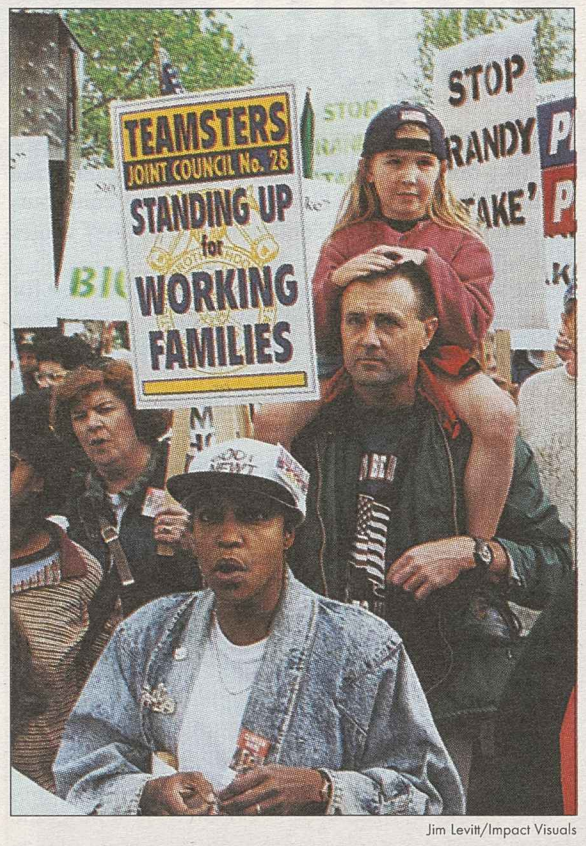
The chief complaint of the seven freshman House members who came calling at the AFL-CIO was that they did not vote for the 30 percent congressional pay raise, which was clearly beside the point.

Their protestations, accompanied by the sound of violins provided by the federation, were met with cries of "Tell the truth!" and "Stop the war on the workers and the poor!" from the assembled crowd, which waved placards, shook noisemakers and rallied behind a banner that said, "Hello Newt's Gang. Welcome to your nightmare — WORKERS UNITED!"

While the unionists waited for the House members, AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee pointed out that Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson were all in cities around the country listening to workers at town hall meetings tell why America Needs a Raise.

He invited several workers who had appeared at a town hall meeting in Washington the day before to speak to the crowd. Among them was Katherine Lugenbeel, 47, who has been downsized out of three jobs since 1990. She challenged Republicans opposed to raising the minimum wage to "buy groceries and pay the rent on the minimum wage. I can't."

When the freshman Republicans were spotted a block away, McEntee sent greeters with flowers urging them to come on down to the House of Working Men and Women "to talk with real working people, and I know that there are many working people in their districts who would like to talk to them."



Jim Levitt/Impact Visuals

Unionists in Seattle took the opportunity to rally against Rep. Randy Tate (R-Wash.) when House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) showed up for a fund raiser.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Workers greet Republican freshmen with rally at news conference in front of AFL-CIO headquarters.

CAPITOL DIGEST

In the 1950s, Congress hunted for "Reds" under America's beds. Today, Republicans in Congress are pointing with alarm at trade unionists in America's workplaces.

That was the tenor of a hearing before the House Ways and Means Social Security subcommittee June 4, when Chairman Jim Bunning (R-Ky.) railed against union activity within the Social Security Administration that is specifically allowed by law.

Bunning's portrayal of these legitimate workplace union activities as an abuse of Social Security Trust Fund money was "a direct attack on organized labor," said AFGE President John N. Sturdivant. AFGE represents 55,000 SSA employees.

The oversight hearing came only weeks after a memo from GOP leaders asked committee and subcommittee chairs to dig up dirt on the Clinton administration and labor unions.

House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.) said Republicans are engaging in "an unprecedented and purely political witch hunt designed to attack both the president's character and to stifle the voice of working people by attacking labor unions."

Executive orders from Republican and Democratic presidents, plus the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act, established the rights and roles of unions in the federal workplace.

The 1978 reforms, acknowledging that government employees must be represented whether or not they join a union, allowed union representatives in federal agencies to use 'official time' for negotiating contracts, handling grievances and conducting and receiving training.

"A deliberate decision was made to directly support union functions by allowing the use of 'official time' rather than require nonmembers to pay their fair share of the representation and services the union is obligated by law to provide," AFGE Local 923 President John Gage explained to the subcommittee.

The SSA and other federal agencies also follow some private-sector companies in providing funding for salaries and office expenses for union representatives, with strict guidelines.

Union representatives are prohibited from using official time to organize workers, solicit new members, campaign for office, conduct union elections or engage in any partisan political activity.

Elsewhere in Congress:

BUDGET WHACKS — The House and Senate were expected to approve the conference report on the GOP budget resolution for fiscal year 1997. While slightly less drastic than the contentious FY 1996 budget plan, it goes after many of the same targets — Medicare, Medicaid, college loans, wage laws and workplace safety.

Workers did win one round during Senate action on the budget blueprint. A resolution by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) supporting the Davis-Bacon Act was approved 59-41, with 12 Republicans backing it.

House appropriations committees already have begun work on the 13 appropriations bills. Members of the Labor\HHS subcommittee are expected to go after workplace safety and health programs, push for restrictive language on ergonomics and deep cuts for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in a June 10 markup.

The Senate swan song of Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) will be a vote on a balanced budget constitutional amendment the week of June 10. He conceded he doesn't have the votes to win, but is bringing the resolution up to boost his presidential campaign.

MEDICARE — Republicans are using a new Congressional Budget Office report, which predicts the Medicare hospital trust fund could become insolvent by 2001, to renew their calls for massive cuts.

During last year's budget fight, Democrats proposed spending changes that would shore up the trust fund. But the GOP insisted on deep Medicare cuts and policy changes — a key reason for President Clinton's veto — to help pay for other parts of their overall budget plan that showered tax breaks on the rich and big business.

"Their goal has been to raid Medicare, not to save it, to lavish more tax breaks on the very people who don't need it," Gephardt said.

— Mike Hall

COURTS

A deal is a deal

The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that an employer cannot disavow a new labor contract because it thinks the union does not have majority support.

The June 3 ruling in Aucellio Iron Works vs. NLRB upholds a lower court ruling that required the Hudson, Mass., company to honor the contract ratified by Shopmen's Local 501, an affiliate of the Iron Workers, in 1988.

The case began after Aucellio reneged on a contract one day after the union ratified it and ended a month-long strike. The company claimed the union did not have the majority support of the workers because some workers had signed forms resigning from the local.

Justice David Souter, writing for the court, said Aucellio had other options it could have used before the contract was ratified. It could have withdrawn its offer and called for decertification of the union or refused to bargain and defend itself by claiming the union lacked support, he said. But challenging a signed contract was clearly illegal, he said.

Anti-union polls limited

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia endorsed the National Labor Relations Board's policy that limits an employer's ability to poll its workers on whether they support unionization.

Under the ruling in Allentown Mack Sales vs. NLRB, it is an unfair labor practice for an employer to withdraw recognition or conduct a poll without sufficient evidence of a loss of a union's majority status. The ruling conflicts with less stringent rulings by three other federal appeals courts and the case could end up before the Supreme Court.

The case began in February 1991 when Machinists Lodge 724 sought recognition at Allentown Mack Sales. The Pennsylvania dealership and repair shop was owned and operated by Mack Trucks until it was sold to three of its dealers who withdrew recognition of the union.

The new company asked a Catholic priest to conduct and tally a secret ballot by employees on union support. The union lost 19-13. The union filed charges with the NLRB, which ordered the company to bargain with the union and barred it from challenging the union's majority status for a reasonable period of time.

America West sued

The Teamsters asked a federal court to force America West airlines to negotiate with the union.

The suit, filed May 10, claims the company violated the Railway Labor Act when it did not respond within 10 days to the union's request to schedule meetings. The suit came as a counter claim to America West's challenge of an April 17 election that made the IBT the bargaining representative for the mechanics.

America West is challenging the votes of 378 workers who were laid off last December. The union says the 587-135 victory would stand even if all the laid-off workers' votes were eliminated. But the company claims their votes "interfered with and improperly influenced the decision of the existing employees."

The National Mediation Board allowed the laid-off employees to vote after agreeing with the union that the layoffs were intended to stymie the representation effort.

Beverly hearings set

Hearings in federal court are set for July 15 on a massive National Labor Relations Board complaint against Beverly Enterprises for hundreds of federal labor law violations.

The 108-page complaint follows an investigation into alleged anti-union activities charges filed by the Service Employees after some 392 Beverly workers were fired for walking out. The workers had offered to return to work unconditionally.

Among the violations cited by the NLRB are illegal replacement of the striking workers, denial of access by union representatives, removal of union bulletin boards, illegal threats and failure to bargain in good faith. The NLRB is seeking back pay and benefits for all the affected workers.

Because of the severity of the violations, the NLRB complaint calls for a "cease and desist" order at all of Beverly's 700 nursing homes across the country and access for the unions to all its facilities.

Religious group decries injustice

By Muriel H. Cooper

A fact-finding mission by a religious organization has concluded that U.S. companies are contributing to horrible working conditions and poverty wages in the global marketplace.

The report by the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice says that Guatemalan immigrant workers are being exploited by the Case Farms Poultry Processing plant in Morganton, N.C. Workers told the Chicago delegation of their concerns about health and safety issues, wages and benefits.

"We are deeply concerned about the situation," said the report, which calls upon "people of faith to do more than 'say grace over chicken.' "

The company refuses to bargain with the workers' chosen representative — the Laborers — despite being ordered to do so by the National Labor Relations Board, the report points out.

A delegation went to the plant in late April to meet with about 500 workers and the plant's management. Even after requesting a meeting several times in advance with management, the group was turned away at the door.

The workers were more cooperative, telling the delegation about such unsafe working conditions as dangerous line speed, no rotation of jobs, no medicines for workers' routine injuries and limited restroom breaks.

They also said that they must purchase some of their own safety equipment, including safety gloves and boots.

"We want people to know that this is the kind of company that recruited the workers from Florida, provided no safety or personnel information in Spanish, treated the workers with disrespect and then denied their rights to bargain collectively," said Kim Bobo, spokeswoman for the Interfaith Committee.

The delegation wants community and clergy leaders to join in the fight to improve workers' living conditions. Many of the poultry workers are crammed into small trailers and charged as much as $1,000 a month in rent for a dwelling with no heat or air conditioning.

"Case Farms has a responsibility to work with community leaders to ensure high-quality, modestly priced housing for these workers," the report said.

The committee is urging consumers to call 800/321-0232 and ask the company why they refuse to negotiate with the workers. They are also putting together a list of wholesalers and distributors that buy poultry from the Morganton plant.

"Injustice to workers anywhere is injustice to workers here," said Bishop Jesse DeWitt, president of the committee. "We are concerned about workers all over the nation and will work for their rights to be upheld."

Workers find natural allies in the church

Communities are bonding through the mutual outreach efforts of religious and union groups.

An example of these efforts could be seen in St. Louis in April, when the Leather Goods, Plastic and Novelty Workers joined with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and Calvary Missionary Baptist Church to sponsor a forum "to consolidate the historical bond that exists between the African-American community, the church and the labor movement."

The United Methodist Church, meanwhile, passed a resolution during its general conference last month pledging the church to explore new ways to reach out and serve working people. Other international and national church groups also have aligned themselves with workers and their unions.

Over the years, churches and unions have worked together to fight for worker and civil rights, laws opposing striker replacement and to guarantee health care and job safety. The St. Louis forum was a continuation of that dialogue, said Andrew McKenzie, president of the Leather Goods, Plastic and Novelty Workers and a vice president of the AFL-CIO.

"We addressed issues critical to the well-being of the African-American worker and the community as a whole, such as voter registration and participation, political information and the negative effects of downsizing on African-American workers and their families," he said.

The Methodists' "Emphasis of Concern for Workers" will reflect the church's relationship with workers and offer ways to increase its outreach mission.

The resolution offers an action plan, calls for a nationwide "Emphasis" task force and conference, and encourages local parishioners to become involved with the unemployed, underemployed and local labor groups.

While recognizing that an "Emphasis of Concern alone will not solve the workplace crisis, each United Methodist must make a personal commitment to join the struggle," said the conference. "By our actions, we seek to proclaim the sacredness of the workplace and the dignity of its workers."

— Muriel H. Cooper

UFW wins historic lettuce contract

Continued from Page 1

"That means the UFW will do everything possible to ensure that union growers flourish economically," he said, "and are competitive and profitable against nonunion firms."

The labor dispute is older than his children, the 41-year-old Taylor told reporters. "Things change, life is changing rapidly. Businesses that don't change become extinct. And unions are the same way."

The pact means better wages and benefits for the workers. It calls for wage increases, health insurance, a pension fund, a seniority system, grievance and arbitration procedures and paid holidays.

The workers will receive increases of 4 percent in the first year followed by 2 percent in the second, third and fourth years and 3 percent in the fifth year. With these wage increases, the average salary will be $7.95 per hour in the first year and $8.56 in the fifth year, according to the union.

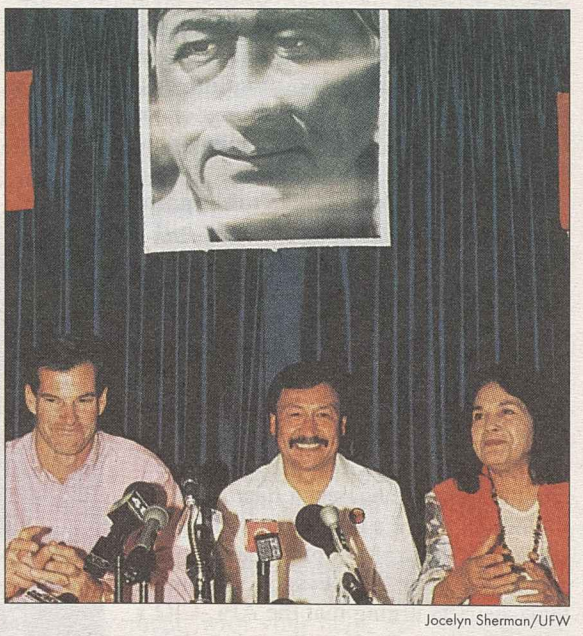
The contract, which will run from June 3, 1996, through June 2, 2001, establishes a pension fund to which the company will contribute 3 percent of hourly wages for each worker.

In certain locations, the workers will receive a $1-an-hour housing allowance. The company also agreed to pay the cost of medical coverage and for prescription, dental and vision plans for workers and dependents.

Other contract provisions include the formation of a labor-management safety committee, limitations on the use of pesticides and promotion of the use of protective clothing.

BCI agreed that the UFW would represent all its agricultural workers in California, and that new employees would become union members within five calendar days of their hiring.

With the acceptance of the agreement by the union and the Agricultural Labor Relations Board, BCI has agreed not to pursue further appeals of two outstanding lawsuits against the union. UFW agreed to ask the AFL-CIO to end the boycott.



Jocelyn Sherman/UFW

A photo of Cesar Chavez overlooks the historic contract signing between BCI's Steve Taylor, left, and UFW's Arturo S. Rodriquez. Secretary-Treasurer Dolores Huerta is at right.

Across the nation, workers tell of struggles

By David Kameras

Working people from around the nation are stepping forward with often moving accounts of how badly America needs a raise.

Faced with ongoing corporate and congressional indifference, citizens in communities large and small are joining in coalitions with unions as the AFL-CIO focuses the debate this political season with nationwide town hall meetings.

Over the past several weeks, the AFL-CIO's executive officers — President John J. Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson — have listened to workers' stories in Seattle, Louisville, Ky., Nashville, Tenn., Detroit, Washington, Las Vegas, Chicago, Houston, Baltimore, Albuquerque, N.M., New York, Cleveland and Wichita, Kan.

In New York, the meetings went borough by borough — in Manhattan, Staten Island, the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn — before culminating in a rally on Wall Street, where Sweeney joined thousands of unionists and their allies in a call for corporate America to get back to the concerns of workers on Main Street.

The Manhattan town hall meeting even included testimony that "America Needs a Raise" from a corporate executive, Kenneth McNutt, who was downsized out of his job at a construction company.

"I'm not here to whine, but I am here to say we've got to start talking," he said. "We can't deny any longer that there's a huge change in the market economy and how it drives us."

In city after city, workers told story after woeful story of the hard times that afflict average families when their jobs are downsized, restructured, re-engineered — in a word, eliminated. The effects of years of job losses, stagnating wages and union busting were presented in stark detail.

If workers had rights

"I work 165 hours a month at my job, and I still have to do a paper route to maintain my own home and to support myself," Deanna Bell, a 62-year-old home care worker in Seattle, told Chavez-Thompson and hundreds of area citizens May 16.

Shimelus Yared was an economist in his native Ethiopia. But now he works part time as a security guard in Seattle for $6 an hour and drives a taxi. "I have to spend $5,000 to $6,000 to bring my family here," he said. "How many years will it take me to save this amount of money?"

Rebecca Adriane, a Seattle child care teacher, has to supplement her income as a substitute public elementary school teacher. "Although I have advanced degrees in my field, I am unable to make a living wage," she said.

Close to 400 workers gathered in the other Washington (D.C.) May 22 to give Sweeney firsthand ammunition in the war on behalf of working families, with more than two dozen people taking the microphone during a 90-minute forum at a United Methodist church blocks from the Capitol.

Marlene Garcia, a Salvadoran immigrant and mother of eight, worked the same job for 15 years and received only one raise from her initial $5.50-an-hour rate, while receiving no benefits. While on vacation, she and all her co-workers were laid off. She was forced to go on public assistance, Garcia said in Spanish through her tears. "If workers on the job had rights, those kinds of things couldn't happen," she said.

Charles Haynes, a single parent raising three children, talked of missing his daughter's plays and his son's ball games. "It's hard to keep a roof over your head," he noted, saying he always thought it proper to "work to live, not live to work."

Meanwhile, Chavez-Thompson met with some 350 workers and their families in Louisville, Ky., that same day.

For one woman, the bottom dropped out when her husband filed for divorce before their 10th anniversary, and ultimately she received only token child support and a portion of the funds for health insurance and extracurricular activities.

She returned to school, earned a master's degree in social work but has yet to find a job.

Trumka went on to Nashville, Tenn., the following day to hear the plight of workers there. A crowd so large that some were left sweltering outside the Progressive Baptist Church heard from workers facing hard times without adequate pay and proper respect.



Daymon J. Hartley/Detroit Sunday Journal

"I have nine kids and 12 grandkids. Sometimes I wonder if there will be a job for my kids someday."

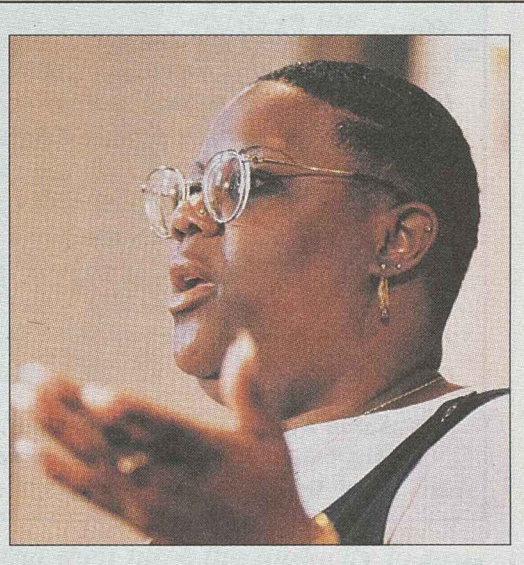
— Al Cruickshank, 55, UAW member whose company is downsizing and sending work to Mexico. Management is offering a 60 percent reduction in salary.

Picket-line tales

More than 300 people, many of them striking Detroit newspaper workers, filled the meeting room of Detroit's Central United Methodist Church May 23 to join Sweeney and a panel of six labor and community leaders to hear poignant stories of strikers who once made $85,000 a year, now reduced to living on $55 a week.

They also heard of students who already owe staggering debts before they graduate. A tearful nursing home worker told of her colleagues who are fired if an unruly patient hurts them.

"I'm trained as a carpenter, but because I'm nonunion, I have no benefits and extremely low wages," Antonia Tellez told a rally in Las Vegas. "I cannot take care of myself, least of all my family."



"My job offers insurance, but I can't afford it. Either I have to pay for the insurance for myself and my child, or we have to eat. We need both. But why should we, as American citizens who are working hard for what we have, have to make the choice of eating or paying insurance for our families?"

— Kim Mitchell, 30-year-old single parent working in Joliet, Ill., for a cerebral palsy center recently organized by AFSCME.

Some 400 Houston workers joined Chavez-Thompson and the Rev. Al Green, former president of the Houston chapter of the NAACP, in a town hall meeting at Austin High School as workers described how layoffs, no benefits, low wages and discrimination had affected them.

My husband has been unemployed for the last 18 months due to a plant closure," said Barbara Atwater, a teacher and mother of three. "The Houston area has jobs, but most are nonunion jobs that pay $7 an hour — kiddie wages."

Social service workers pointed to the enormous burden their agencies have shouldered at precisely the time when state and local governments are racing to slash programs. The constant struggle for food, shelter and health care by the formerly employed and the working poor has shredded the social safety net.

"I work with a diverse clientele, but cannot find one full-time job that would enable them to support their families," said Anna Curtis, an administrator for Kashmere Merit Service Center, a Houston job placement facility.

The power of unions

A consistent view that surfaced at all the meetings was the value of unions in giving working people the power to achieve dignity and improve working conditions.

"I was always afraid my child would become ill with no insurance," said Debbie Mauk, a former Wal-Mart checker in Las Vegas who received low pay and no benefits, who now works for Price Rite. "Now I have a union with health and welfare benefits, a pension, and I'm making good wages. I love it."

A Mexican immigrant in Louisville told how his hard work and good fortune allowed him to buy into the American dream. After 40 failed efforts to obtain a work visa, he was successful. He's been a union carpenter for 17 years now and able to provide a good life for his family.

In many cities, the town hall meetings served as a vehicle for mobilizing activity to further local, regional and national initiatives.

More than 450 workers and community supporters at the St. Malachy School in Chicago used their event as the kickoff of the city's campaign for a living wage ordinance, which would require private companies doing business with the city or receiving city subsidies to pay workers a minimum of $7.60 an hour.

"This year, we are going to be lobbying in Olympia for a livable wage," said Liz Pierini of the Washington League of Women Voters in Seattle. "We're there with you. We want to be there with you more."

Also contributing to this report were Muriel H. Cooper, Colleen M. O'Neill, James B. Parks and Sharolyn A. Rosier.

AMERICA NEEDS A RAISE

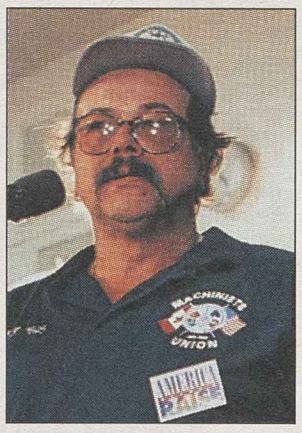
AFL-CIO

'I'm running really har just to stay in the same

Seattle

"Corporate greed has gotten out of hand in this country."

— Larry Thompson, Machinists 695 president, Olympia.



"In-home care is a very critical job that people depend on. We are going to need more and more workers as more of our frail, elderly and disabled people choose to stay in their homes instead of going into institutions. It costs the state a lot more for their care in an institution than it does to keep these people in their own homes."

— Deanna Bell, homecare worker, Aberdeen.

"I've seen a lot of changes since I was a young woman, and they are not good at all. We had strong unions then, and the unions have been coming under attack for many years. Our good jobs have been going overseas. America is really hurting."

— Virginia Jarvis, retired union worker.



"These people who are working at minimum wage jobs and trying to raise their families, it is impossible and it's cruel. Today, I have a friend who just lost her husband. She has two baby children, and she is looking in the job market to get a job. She wants to move in with her sister. Her sister is currently working at minimum wage, and so everybody is pooling together and living in the same house so that they can survive. She can't pay for child care."

— Denine Brewer, a Seattle Carpenter who used to work three jobs at $5 an hour each.

"Many of my co-workers would love to be here, but they can't afford to. They need to work two jobs because they need to take care of their children."

— Rebecca Adrian, child care worker, teacher, Seattle.

"Americans need a raise. But I encourage you to see this more in a global sense and to connect with our international brothers and sisters to mobilize all working people."

— The Rev. Angela Ying of the Church Council of Greater Seattle.





Jim Levitt/Impact Visuals

"Why . . . can't we require our government and anyone that does business with it to pay a minimum of $10 an hour, which places a family just over the poverty level? Why can't we require them to pay health care insurance for all of the workers, whether they are temporary or not? And why can't we require nonaggression on union organizing?"

— Sarah Ryan, part-time worker at U.S. Postal Service and two other employers.

Detroit

"I'm scared about the future. I see people standing in lines for book loans. I'm 22 years old and I'll be $20,000 in debt."

— Jackie Knowles, college student, Southfield.

"To talk about the few bucks we hand to people to hang on by their fingernails, while we give millions and billions to corporations to feast at banquet tables and give our profits to stockholders, is immoral."

— Rev. Edwin Rowe, pastor of Detroit's Central United Methodist Church and a leading supporter of the Detroit newspaper strike.



"Pensions at Dayton Hudson are at poverty level. They range from $50 a month to $200 if you have 35 years of service. I have a friend who got $59 a month and had to pay the company $20 a month for health care. Another woman received $191 a month and had to pay $167 a month for health care. People have to move in with their children, their savings are depleted."

— Irene Kowal, retired Dayton Hudson department store employee.

"I'm a direct care (mental nursing home) worker. For eight years, we've been denied the right to have representation. The state even took it to the Supreme Court. We hire in at minimum wage. We have no insurance. Workers can't afford to take a day off from work, so they come to work with the flu, pneumonia, and they pass that on to us and the residents that are in the homes. We have no such thing as retirement, we don't have pensions. We don't have any way of supporting ourselves once our work time is over. We work with very volatile and behavioral-problem clients. Workers are being hurt on the job by some of the clients and they get fired for being hurt. Worst of all, they are fired for being incompetent because they're told that if they were competent, they wouldn't have gotten hurt. They are the most needy workers in this state and they're taking care of the most needy residents and still can't get to the bargaining table."



— Lola DeBois, President, AFSCME Local 3994.

"I work in a nursing home and along with a raise, we need health insurance. If your back is injured or you're sick, you still have to go to work. If you take off, you don't get paid and if you go to the doctor, you can't pay the doctor."

— Sandra Watts, mother of three and member of SEIU Local 79, Detroit.

"Over the course of my lifetime, I've seen my stepdad have his job pulled out from under him. I've seen my mother-in-law in the last two years have 26 years on the job go down the drain. Now I see my own family struggle with the fact that I had nine years in with Detroit Newspapers. We need to let these leaders in Washington know that it is unacceptable what is going on here."

— Shawn Ellis, striking IBT member whose wife had to increase her hours at work to sustain the family's income.

rd and fast
e place'

Louisville

"I have a daughter who has three children and a husband that's not able to work. . . . So my daughter worked at the Census Bureau, and you know after a few months they call you back and then they lay you off and then call you back, and every time they lay you off you lose your health benefits. So she . . . took a job with the Board of Education as a teacher's aide, working 28 hours a week for $6 an hour. That comes to about $168 a week, $672 a month — health insurance for her husband, three children and herself is $312 a month. Her house payment — because she happened to get a 'Habitat for Humanity' house, thank God for them — when she's through paying taxes, she's got $125 for clothes, food, gas, lights, water — she needs a raise!

— Augusta Thomas, a retired AFGE member, Louisville.

"Both my dad, who was a corporate executive, and my brother-in-law, who was a highly skilled technical worker, have been downsized, each of them, out of two jobs, so I'm aware of the downsizing pressure. My own orchestra has been fighting off a downsizing push for three years. It's very important to me, because my job is one of the very first ones to be cut if we downsize even by one person.

"My wage is about half or one-third what other professionals make, so I supplement this with two other jobs. That means I do two other jobs on top of my full-time symphony schedule. I feel like I'm running really hard and fast just to stay in the same place. As long as nothing bad happens, I can stay upright, pretty much. I am lucky, because I'm working. . . ."

— Bill Bauer, a musician with the Louisville Orchestra.

"Right now, I'm currently working at Champ's Rollerdome; I want to pursue my education and go on into the profession of architecture. I have a hurdle in my life. Working on $4.25 and barely making 20 hours every two weeks, I can't do that. I get up at 5:30 in the morning, go to school full time, attend after-school programs and go directly to work. Coming home from work, I have to catch public transportation, get home about 10:30 or 11 o'clock at night and then do homework to uphold a high enough GPA average to get into college; that's if I'm able to go there. . . .

"Education costs money, something I don't have because I'm working on a $4.25-an-hour job at which I don't get that many hours. Working two weeks, I might get $100. How can I pay for college making almost $100 in two weeks' time?"

— William Burrus, 18, a junior in high school.

Houston

"I took a fiber optics course, and now when I go apply for a job, everyone wants previous experience. I worked at a chemical plant for 17 years but got laid off. It's impossible to make the money I used to make without experience. I am 44 years old and am worried because, with no experience, I may need to take a minimum wage job, and that would be difficult to support my wife and two kids on."

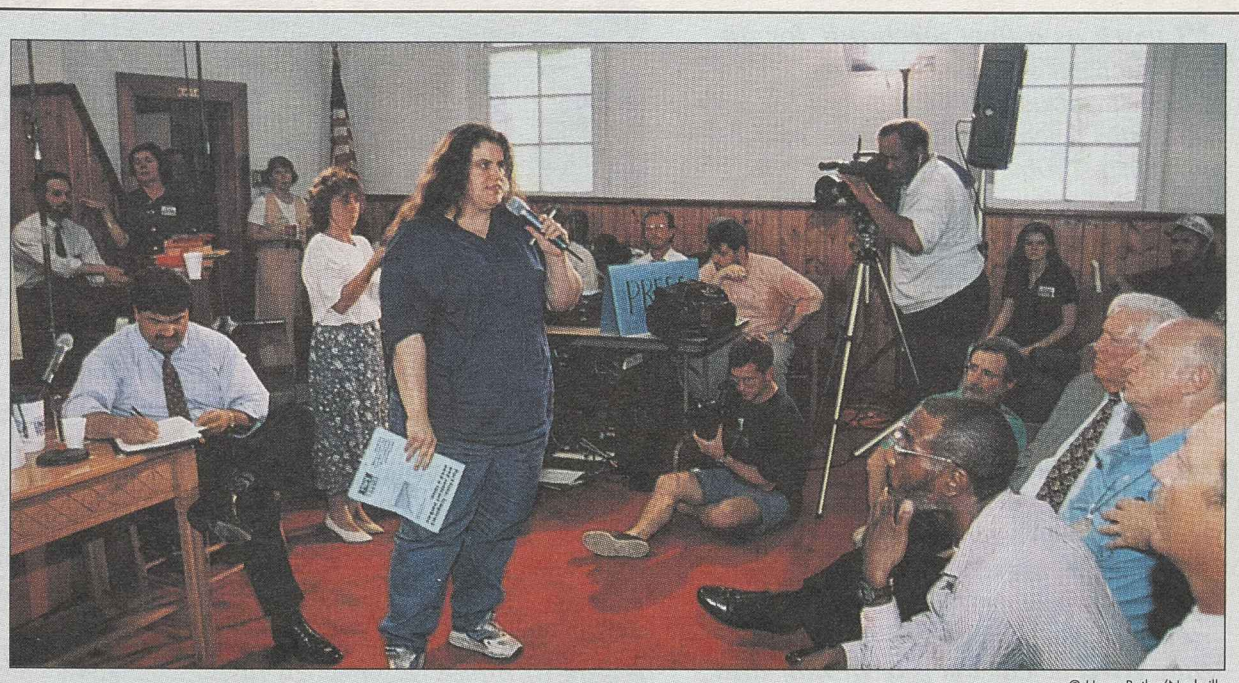
— Sylvester Munoz, unemployed.

"I have been applying for jobs in the city, county and the private industry for 10 months. I am a college graduate and have 20 years of government experience. I have submitted 146 applications with the city of Houston, 38 with private industries and 10 with the county."

— Henry Taylor, single and unemployed.

"I have been teaching for 28 years with inadequate medical benefits. We pay too much for too little. I am underpaid and unappreciated for my experience and degrees. And my purchasing power is limited. My husband has been unemployed for the last 18 months due to a plant closure. The Houston area has jobs, but most are nonunion jobs that pay $7 an hour — kiddie wages. The older you get, you also have to deal with age discrimination."

— Barbara Atwater, who supports her husband and three children.



© Harry Butler/Nashville

"I make twice the minimum wage 40 hours a week every month – and 70 percent of that income goes to my rent. That doesn't include utilities. I'm a full-time student, full-time mom, part-time mom and a full-time worker. . . .

"If I take a day off work to find a permanent job with health care, I lose my electric bill. I don't pay my electric bill. If I take two days off, my gas and electric goes. If I lose more than three days trying to find a full-time permanent job with medical benefits or trying to get medical benefits for my children and myself, I don't pay the rent.

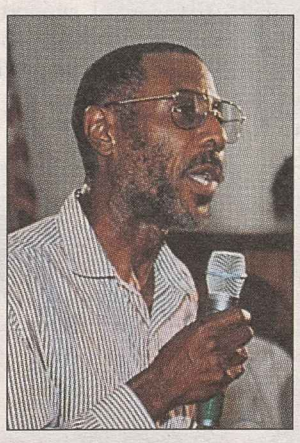
"It's very difficult feeding children rice five times a week and potatoes on the weekend. You can use chicken soup with rice when they're sick, but that doesn't help any broken bones or bruises or sinus infections that socioe-conomically I am prone to because of my wage, because of my gender and because of my blended family stress.

"I was on welfare right after my divorce from my first husband. My husband now was downsized to welfare. His children are on welfare. He's a full-time student on scholarship because he's so smart. But they apparently don't pay everyone for being smart. The empty promise of getting a degree hasn't helped me much. I have an associate arts degree and am five credits away from a bachelor's degree, and still I can't find an employer that will compensate me for my intelligence or my work."

— Michelle Hagstrom, a remarried mother of two plus five children, Nashville, Tenn.

Nashville

"I work menial jobs, low-paying and definitely physically challenging. Kind of reminds me and lets me know that really, slavery hasn't been abolished. It still exists in the minimum wage law.



"How can anyone have incentive to work at $4.25 an hour? How can you aspire to be anything or do anything at $4.25 an hour, when it's just a job to get back and forth to that job? It's awful, really. You have these people at $4.25 voting for the politicians who sit back and make $70,000 plus perks and a lavish lifestyle, and then have the audacity to say, 'We're going to vote down a little minimum increase in the wage.' It's almost like they want to keep everybody still under slavery. . . . It's a pitiful situation."

— Harry Lewis, laid off from Textron, formerly Avco, where he was making $15.81 an hour after 20 years.

"We were on strike for eight months against Pirelli tire company. The strike was inevitable. The company arbitrarily decided they were going to take away retiree benefits — 10 days before the contract deadline. I want to tell you the effect it had on the retirees — they were devastated. All of them felt like they were betrayed. One in particular called his family in — he was taking chemotherapy — and he said when his benefits were cut off, he wanted them to let him die. He wasn't going to bankrupt his family to prolong his life.

"As we raise the consciousness of America to what's happening, we need to make sure that corporations are accountable to people who have worked for 30 years and built companies all across this country."

— John Johnson, member of USWA Local 670, Clarksville.

"I work for Metro government here in Davidson County. I started with them about 18 months ago . . . and now I'm making $7.57 an hour, and everything's gone up above my pay. I pay $100 a month in health insurance, and if a couple of people get sick in my household at one time, that runs right quick into $200, counting your co-pays.



"America is one payday away from default. What I mean by that is, there are so many Americans out here living one payday to the next, it's not funny watching them struggling by."

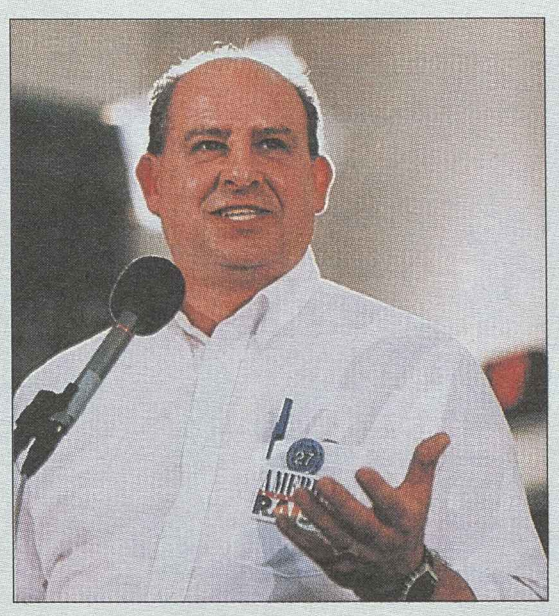
— Gene McLain, father of two, was injured on the job and no longer can work overtime or work on the side as an auto mechanic.

"I work as a fleet mechanic for an airline food service company, Canadian-based. I've worked for almost 33 years, both union and nonunion jobs. Twenty years ago, I earned more money as a Teamster truck mechanic than I do today. I know America needs a raise.

"In that 33 years, I've worked sometimes two jobs to make ends meet. In 1985, a new company purchased the company I was working for. They offered people a position and the amount of wages they would be receiving with the new company. A co-worker of mine with 34 years' seniority was forced into early retirement because he could not accept a 50 percent cut in pay — they tried to cut his pay in half and expected him to continue to work.

"The men and women who work preparing and packaging the food sometimes work 14 hours a day. Although this helps make ends meet, it keeps them away from their families and their homes. They're there trying to earn a living.

"Not only do they have to work this 14 hours, sometimes there are



managers and efficiency experts trying to make them work faster. These people account for every minute and every moment of their 14-hour day, and this indignity is just impossible to work under. America needs a raise, not just in money but in respect and dignity. If you're in a union now, support it. If you're not, please come join us."

— Peter Vitrano, Manassas, Va.

Chicago



"Corporate America will lock you out to impose a contract that they want. They've got the money. We're going to have to take back the United States from these powerful corporations that are running it. They're trying to make us a Third World country and third-class citizens, and we're tired of it."

— Gary Collins, a Paperworker from Charleston, Ill., locked out Jan. 21 by Trailmobile.



"For me, the American dream was getting a job with a Fortune 500 company. Twenty-two years later, Xerox, who said that year they had the biggest profit of its history, told 300 employees there was no more work. I am in my 50s, and the American dream came crashing down. You go from middle class, past low class, down to no income at all. But I say to all of you, don't let anybody pull your confidence down, because if survival is all that I have left in this world instead of going back to middle class. . . . I will survive."

— Denise Alford

"Several years ago, my living wage was just getting me by. Today, my wages are the same, but the cost of living has increased, my rent has increased, my transportation has increased and I have two kids to support. I was taught to do what's right to get a job and work an honest day and get a fair wage for your labor. It worked for my grandparents and my parents, but it's not working for me."

— Ray Kimbrough, security officer.

Washington

"Currently, I am holding down two jobs; I was wrongly terminated from one of them. My son started playing organized ball for the first time this year. By me holding down two jobs, I was not able to be there. My father wasn't there for me. That hurt me more than anything. Missing plays that my daughter participated in at school because I'm working two jobs. It's hard to even keep a roof over their head with the pay that you get. It's just hard.

"I was always under the assumption that a person should work to live and not live to work. I think America needs to address these issues now."

— Charles Haynes, a single parent of three children.



"I have my associate's degree in pre-law, my bachelor's degree and also my MBA in international management. I have five kids. I'm about to send two of my kids back to Africa to go to school. I don't know how to make ends meet. I don't see the purpose. I wonder what to tell my kids. Do you go to school or do you just find something else to do? It's like there's no point. If I, as a parent, cannot find a job with having three degrees, how would I encourage my kids to go ahead and go to school? It's very disheartening."

— Oyin Akinseye, Washington, D.C.

"I've been laid off within the last six years three times. My jobs have been an underwriter, an administrative aide assistant and receptionist. When I found this last job, I thought for sure, 'This is it, I'm going to retire from here, I've got it made.' It was contracted out and they decided that they didn't need me.

"My mom came here from France shortly after the war. She made it. She fought very hard, as a single woman. I can't do what she did anymore. I can't do it. I think America needs a raise and America also needs companies and corporations that treat people with respect, which they don't get anymore."

— Katherine Lugenbeel, Alexandria, Va.

"Sixty-five percent of the people who currently stay in the shelter work on a full- or part-time basis. Many of these individuals make $4.25 an hour. They are truly the unsung heroes of our nation's capital. Many of these people are the invisible hands who work in food service industries and parking lots, and our nation's capital is better for their efforts.

"However, many of them do not have the means to afford permanent, decent housing. I have a client who is a single father who has a 14-year-old child. At this point in time, he has a 40-hour-a-week job in the food service industry. This client is presently in one of our transitional houses because he cannot afford permanent housing, even though he's doing his best to raise his son. America needs a raise, ladies and gentleman, we all need the dignity that permanent, decent housing would afford all of us."

— Laura White, a social worker at a shelter operated by the Community for Creative Non-Violence.

Marc Pokempner/Impact Visuals

"After 17 years of being in an office, I traded in my work suit for a hard hat. I got better benefits, better pay and created a better opportunity for my kids. I grew up in a family of eight, and I vowed that my kids would not have to work to bring checks home as I did during my teen-age years.

"Getting into the trades was my salvation. My son has As and Bs and deserves opportunities to attend college. I am proud to be able to support him in this way and serve as a role model for both my kids. More people should have opportunities like I have and not have to wait as long as I did for them."

— Ella Jones, Sprinkler Fitters Local 281.



Photos by Virginia Blaisdell

Leading a march through New Haven are the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and HERE Local 34 President Laura Smith, as 8,000 workers, students and residents rally.

Yale students get post-grad lesson

Rally for workers draws strong community support

By Muriel H. Cooper

In a spectacular show of solidarity, more than 8,000 union members, students and New Haven community residents gathered at the New Haven Green to rally against Yale University's "subcontract on working families."

The "People's Commencement," a boisterous counterpart to Yale's 295th commencement ceremonies, provided a rich contrast between the uncaring, elitist attitude of the university and the plight of Yale's workers, members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, who have been without a contract since January while working under the threat of job insecurity.

"The AFL-CIO will not stand still while Yale conducts a massive downsizing campaign aimed at nearly 4,000 clerical, technical, service and maintenance workers at the second-richest university who know that 'subcontracting' is just boss-talk for laid off and outta luck," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka told the crowd.

Dozens of graduating Yale seniors, wearing YALE SETTLE! yellow stickers on their gowns, joined workers representing hundreds of unions and community organizations and their families who gathered to support the members of HERE Locals 34 and 35.

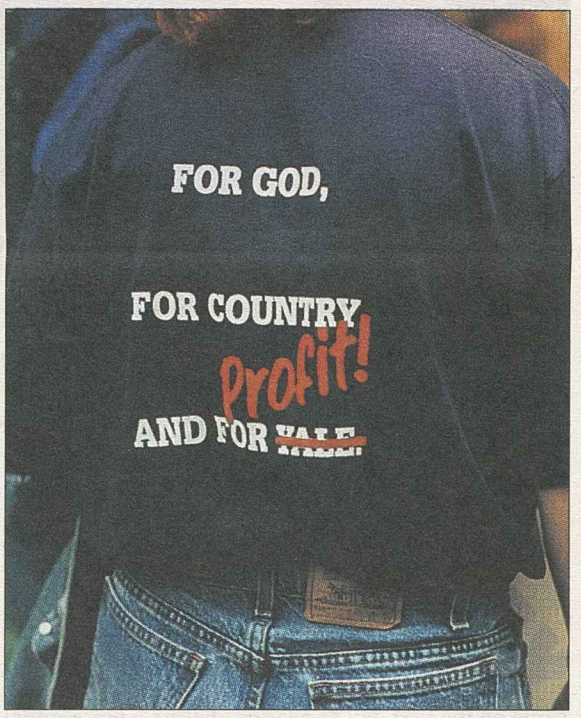
The huge show of solidarity was generated by an AFL-CIO campaign that was planned for more than a month, with national and regional federation staff working full time on the project, along with members of AFSCME.

The union response was extraordinary, as buses brought in supporters from as far away as California. The Electrical Workers local in Boston sponsored a billboard to promote the rally that was seen by millions of motorists. Musicians from the New York Philharmonic donated their time and talents to perform a concert for the workers.

The rally, coinciding with Memorial Day, included national, state and local speakers, a variety of entertainment and "a sound system that could be heard across the Yard," according to Vincent O'Brien of the federation's Field Mobilization Department, who was assigned to the project.

"The graduates across the street are looking forward to their futures and we wish them a tremendous amount of success," said Laura Smith, president of Local 34. Indeed, union members applauded as the graduates marched in. "But we are here today to make certain that we all have futures to look forward to, as well."

The two locals earlier this year conducted two separate monthlong strikes that amounted to bold statements to the university that the unions were strong and would not let job titles and diversity divide them.



While Local 34 — a unit of clerical and technical workers — were striking, workers from the sister local financially supported the strikers, a favor that was returned a month later as the service and maintenance members of Local 35 walked the picket line.

At issue not only at Yale, but across the nation, is the price that American families pay when jobs are subcontracted, Trumka said.

"We are not going to stand by while Yale destroys any chance for thousands of families to make it into the middle class. We're not going to hold our tongues while Yale preaches its passion for education, then practices policies of degradation," he said.

Yale is New Haven's biggest workplace, employing one in seven working adults in the city. With manufacturing jobs leaving town over the past 20 years, the university dominates the local economy.

Trumka noted that Yale is a money-making machine, taking in $1 billion every year while keeping $5 billion in the bank — making it a trendsetter in the community.

The irony of this, the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson told the crowd, is that workers living in the seventh-poorest city in the nation are fighting to protect their $23,000-a-year jobs and pensions and health insurance in one of the nation's wealthiest states.

The union plans to conduct informational leafleting during the upcoming alumni weekends.

Other rally speakers included Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.); Miles Rappaport, Connecticut secretary of state; James J. Norton, president of the Graphic Communications Union; John Olsen, president of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, and John Wilhelm, western regional director for HERE.

Workers drop black flag at Indy 500 race

Safety tally crashes at Bridgestone/Firestone

By James B. Parks

Hundreds of Steelworkers and their families converged on Indianapolis over Memorial Day weekend to symbolically drop a black flag over Bridgestone/Firestone at the Indy 500 and to deliver a message that they will not go away until the company negotiates a fair contract.

During the pre-race parade May 25, the unionists unfurled banners from hotel roofs proclaiming "Black Flag Firestone!" The parade drew about 200,000 people, thousands of whom carried black balloons provided by the USWA.

On race day, May 26, some 700 unionists and their families marched on the Firestone pavilion waving black flags just before the race got under way. The marchers came from 12 states, some from as far away as California.

The black flag is the traditional racing symbol for disqualifying a car for outrageous rules violations. The USWA's "black flag" campaign is asking consumers not to buy Bridgestone/Firestone products or services, such as tires, golfing equipment, sporting goods or auto repairs at MasterCare centers around the country until all workers are returned to work with back wages and a fair contract is negotiated.

The USWA and Bridgestone/Firestone have been unable to reach agreement on a contract since July 1994, when 4,000 workers walked off the job. The workers suspended the strike after 10 months. During the strike, Bridgestone/Firestone hired 2,300 replacement workers. At issue is the rehiring of 700 strikers.

"Bridgestone/Firestone is a poster child for corporate greed and irresponsibility," USWA President George Becker said. "This is an abusive employer which illegally replaced 2,000 workers during an unfair labor practice strike and has put those workers and their families through 22 months of hell."

Becker said the USWA will follow Bridgestone/Firestone throughout the Indy Car racing circuit this year "until all of our striking workers are back on the job with a decent contract, when Bridgestone/Firestone stops illegally firing and disciplining workers who participated in the strike, and when the company pays the tens of millions of back pay it owes these families."

Meanwhile, the union has uncovered a history of health and safety violations that have led to injuries and deaths at Bridgestone/Firestone facilities.

In August 1994, two nonunion subcontract workers at the Wilson, N.C., plant were killed when a large fuel tank exploded while they were welding on top of it. The state issued citations against the company, the contractor and the subcontractor.

In October 1993, an experienced worker at the Oklahoma City plant was injured while adjusting a tire assembly machine. The company claimed the machine did not have to be turned off and disabled before starting maintenance. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued citations to Dayton Tire, a Bridgestone/Firestone subsidiary, with proposed penalties of $7.5 million.

At the Des Moines plant in February 1996, a replacement worker was hospitalized with severe burns following a pressure release from a curing press. To add insult to the injuries, the security guard laughed when local union representatives asked to enter the plant to investigate. The manager on duty told the union representatives he had too many other problems to deal with them. The union has filed a complaint with OSHA over the incident.

Also in Des Moines, a replacement worker was injured in November 1994 when he was caught in a machine that sends large sheets of rubber through a roller mechanism. Another Des Moines worker's foot was pinned between the halves of a curing mold in January 1995.

BARGAINING

6,700 Machinists strike

Machinists at McDonnell Douglas Corp. walked out June 5 after rejecting the aerospace company's latest contract offer. Some 86 percent of the 6,700 members of IAM District 837 in St. Louis voted against the pact.

The key issue in the talks is McDonnell Douglas's increasing use of outside contractors and the transfer of some work to nonunion plants in Mesa, Ariz., and Macon, Ga.

Workers also complained that wages have not increased significantly for years, and 500 employees were laid off this year.

The strike does not affect the rest of the company's 23,000 workers in St. Louis or other IAM members in other cities where McDonnell Douglas has plants.

UBC, LIUNA in N.J. pact

The Carpenters and Laborers reached the first statewide agreements in New Jersey with the Building Contractors Association covering 27,000 workers.

The parties agreed to a set of terms and conditions that will be negotiated into agreements during the next few months. The terms took effect May 1. Under the terms, UBC members will receive a $1-hour wage increase effective May 1, plus 5 cents an hour to a joint health and safety fund. A single statewide UBC contract will be in place by May 1997, according to Tom Ober, president of the state Council of Carpenters.

The three-year agreement with LIUNA provides widespread standardization of contract language aimed at making union employers more competitive. Most importantly, there will be one LIUNA contract for the state, replacing 30 local agreements, said LIUNA District Manager Ray Pocino.

The LIUNA agreement calls for three work classifications instead of one, with workers receiving raises ranging from 50 cents an hour to $2.25, depending on classification.

UFCW, First National agree

The Food and Commercial Workers ratified a new three-year contract with First National Supermarkets that increases wages and health care benefits.

The accord, ratified May 12, covers some 6,500 hourly employees at 38 stores operated as Edwards Super Food Stores in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Under the contract, department heads and journeymen meatcutters will receive wage increases totaling $80 per week, with $30 coming in the first year and $25 raises in each of the two following years.

All other full-time employees at the top of their wage progression will receive raises of $25 per week in each of the three years for a total of $75.

The agreement also calls for the company to increase its contribution to the health and welfare fund for full-time employees in three increments from the current $491 per month to $550 as of Jan. 1, 1999. The contribution for part-timers will increase from $114 per month to $155.

Guild, CBC reach pact

The Canadian Media Guild reached a last-minute tentative agreement with the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. May 24 that gives the workers protections against subcontracting.

While details of the agreement were not immediately available, Canadian director Arnold Amber said, "We helped build a union here."

The Newspaper Guild/Communications Workers executive board had approved a strike sanction for the Canadian Media Guild in its dispute with CBC. TNG-CWA President Linda K. Foley stressed that the unanimous May 15 vote showed the union was standing behind the Canadian Guild, Local 213, and would have committed full resources to obtain a fair contract.

The Canadian Guild, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers and the Canadian Broadcast Employees bargained for 16 months with the CBC. The main issue was the CBC's demand for the right to contract out all programs and services and then to lay off CBC employees. The other two unions reached tentative agreements May 23.

The Guild represents about 3,300 CBC reporters, editors, producers, announcers and researchers.

Hathaway workers fight for jobs

After years of sacrifice, more than 500 UNITE members now are fighting for their jobs at a C.F. Hathaway shirt manufacturing plant in Waterville, Maine.

The Warnaco Group, the parent company, announced May 6 that it would shut down or sell the plant, and end production as early as midsummer. It also said it would end production of the shirts in Canada and Puerto Rico.

Those plans are on hold as the union, investors and politicians have stepped forward in an effort to save the oldest shirt manufacturing company in the nation — and the largest employer in Waterville.

An investment group headed by former Maine GOP governor John McKernan has entered into an exclusive 90-day agreement to develop a proposal for purchase of the Hathaway name and plants in the state and Canada.

UNITE also has retained an investment banking group. "We need time to save these jobs," said Mike Cavanaugh, the Maine business manager for UNITE.

Independent Gov. Angus King and other politicians have joined in requesting that the company give the union time to identify a buyer. "I'd like to find a buyer that wants to make a made-in-America statement," King told the Associated Press.

Unfortunately, the Waterville story is familiar all over New England, where many textile mills have shut down over the years, many abandoned by companies that sought cheap labor, first in southern states and then in other countries. In the process, generations of workers have lost their livelihoods.

It is a bitter pill for the Hathaway workers, who in 1994 agreed to a new contract that provided for a joint labor-management effort to "increase productivity and secure employment."

The workers gave up their first year of wage increases to launch the program. And the program was successful, improving productivity and cutting production costs in half over a 15-month period.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney testifies along with Maintenance of Way Employees President Mac Fleming.

Court denies separate rail bargaining

By David Kameras

A federal judge turned down a request by the Maintenance of Way Employees to permit them to bargain separately with the nation's rail carriers.

BMWE President Mac Fleming charged D.C. District Court Judge Thomas Hogan, a Reagan appointee, with political bias against the union, noting the ruling came on the first day of hearings before a presidential emergency board tasked with helping to resolve BMWE's contract dispute.

At that May 28 hearing, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney continued his testimony on behalf of rail labor, following an appearance he made May 13 for the Transportation Communications Union, the first ever for a federation officer. Throughout, he has carried the message that the wages of rail workers, like those of most Americans, have stagnated, while railroads are reaping enormous profits.

"When CEO compensation climbs 50 percent and rail profits charge up 78 percent since 1990 — while workers' real wages decline 10 percent — it is simply wrong," Sweeney said.

Hogan said the issue of multiemployer bargaining is a matter for Congress to decide, not the courts, and ordered the union not to strike until all steps under the Railway Labor Act have been taken.

The ruling is not expected to have any immediate effect, as the parties already have been released from arbitration and are subject to a presidential emergency board. But Fleming warned that future negotiations could be affected. The union plans to appeal.

Meanwhile, President Clinton appointed his third presidential emergency board in two weeks to try to resolve contract disputes in national rail negotiations.

The board will make recommendations toward reaching an agreement between major carriers and the Electrical Workers, Machinists, Railroad Signalmen and Sheet Metal Workers. The United Transportation Union earlier reached an arbitrated settlement.

In a related development, the Locomotive Engineers ratified a contract that will raise wages for 20,000 members at least 10.5 percent by July 1999.

Separate performance-share wage agreements were reached with Norfolk Southern and Santa Fe railroads, while an agreement with CSX Transportation is awaiting ratification and talks continue with Conrail.

Status quo urged for Railway Labor Act

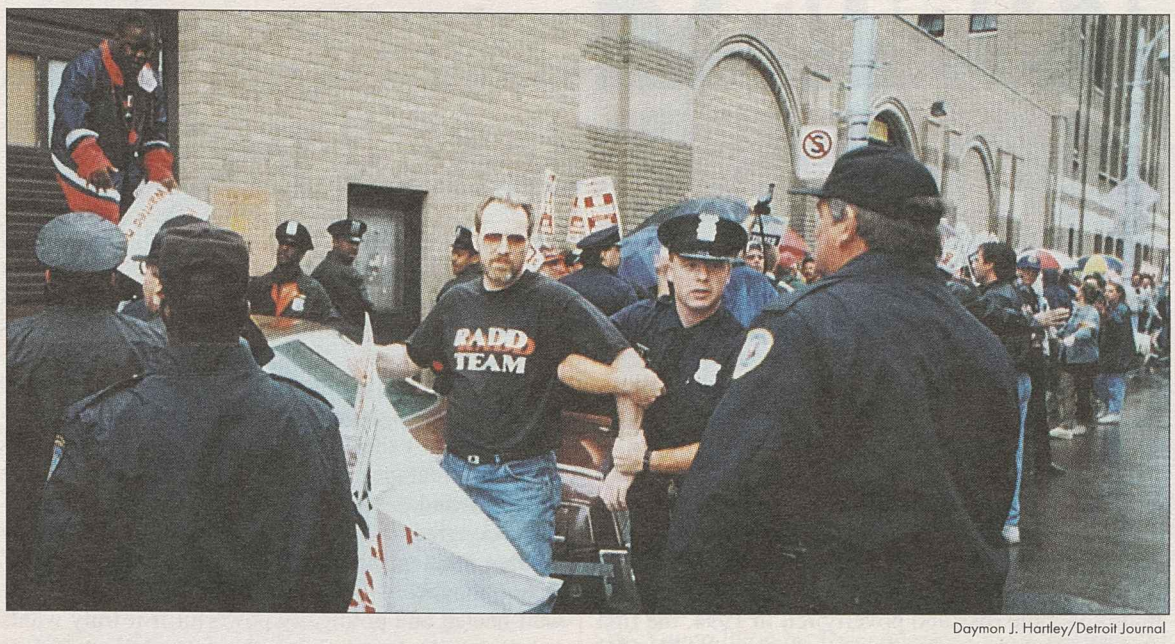
A labor-management panel expressed its opposition to substantial changes to the Railway Labor Act, which sets out the rules for labor relations at most of the nation's air carriers.

In a report released May 21, committee members called for keeping the National Mediation Board independent, with its functions kept intact, while considering the use of special trouble-shooters in demanding cases.

"While each side could develop a 'wish list' of legislative enactments that might further their own parochial interests, both have concluded that the potential for disruption far outweighs the marginal gain that any legislative refinements might provide," said the panel, which had its genesis in the president's Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations, known as the Dunlop Commission.

The group also suggested that mediation be seen as a way to assist parties to reach an agreement, rather than as a method for avoiding a strike. In addition, the officials said requests for the use of private arbitrators should be respected, and made a number of other suggestions aimed at improving the NMB's effectiveness.

Included on the panel were representatives of the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department, Air Line Pilots, Flight Attendants, Machinists, Transport Workers and Teamsters.



Daymon J. Hartley/Detroit Journal

UAW members, supporting the Detroit strikers as the RADD Team, are arrested in front of the Detroit News.

Detroit strikers turn up volume

By James B. Parks

The Detroit newspaper strikers are using new, more aggressive tactics against wealthy publishing giants that have lost huge sums in an effort to bust the unions.

"These people plan to wipe you off the face of the Earth," Eddie Burke, a Teamsters staffer assigned to coordinate AFL-CIO efforts to help the strikers, told a May 14 rally. "The only way to prevent that is to take the volume of what you're doing and turn it up."

And turn it up they have.

After AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney led 200 strikers in a May 23 march in drizzling rain to the Detroit News building, marchers circled the company's garages. Later, 17 marchers were arrested after two old cars were driven into the garage driveway and left there without keys. Strike supporters jumped on top of the cars waving pro-union signs while other marchers surrounded the cars.

The march and civil disobedience came in the second week of the strikers' "Spring Rage," a campaign to bring the "message to Detroit that this strike is far from over, that we will do whatever it takes to get a fair contract for the 2,000 families that these corporations are trying to destroy," Burke said.

The strikers' new strategy involves redeploying pickets and extensive use of nonviolent civil disobedience. Instead of picketing every day at the same sites, strikers will be sent daily to different locations on a mix of assignments. Members of other unions, most notably the UAW, also have been trained to participate in civil disobedience as well in support of the strikers.

Some 2,000 employees of the News and Free Press, owned by Gannett and Knight-Ridder, respectively, have been on strike since July 13, 1995, after negotiations failed to produce a new agreement. Management and imported scabs from other papers are producing the newspapers. Hired union-busting security goons from Vance and Huffmaster are delivering the papers. Striking unions include the IBT, Communications Workers, Graphic Communications Union and The Newspaper Guild.

Eight strikers handcuffed themselves to the Free Press front door May 22, while another 100 people marched onto the newspaper's back loading dock. The same day, dozens of marchers, chanting and playing makeshift drums and blowing whistles, blocked several downtown intersections.

Hundreds of strikers also marched through a neighborhood in Warren, a Detroit suburb, passing out 200 lawn signs and signing up 100 subscribers to the striker-produced Sunday Journal newspaper. They also marched in front of the homes of some newspaper executives and columnists chanting "Scabs in the 'Hood."

They handed out leaflets directed at advertisers and stores that carry the scab-produced Free Press and News.

The labor movement also has stepped up its support of the strikers. "The strikers have given the greatest sacrifice and the greatest courage one could expect of workers and we in the labor movement must put all the pressure and solidarity we can muster in support of the strike until we get all the workers back to work," Sweeney told an "America Needs a Raise" town hall meeting in Detroit. Later, he pledged to the strikers that the AFL-CIO "will be coming back to you to see how we can be even more helpful."

More than 500 delegates to the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists convention in Miami Beach joined striking workers and marched on Knight-Ridder's headquarters. "It was wonderful. A lot of them had heard about the strike, but they didn't know what the issues were," said Jocelyn Faniel-Heard, a striking TNG member. "It was very encouraging for us to have them with us."

PBS show focuses on Detroit, AFL-CIO

We Do The Work, the only national television show that is devoted to covering working people, will examine the Detroit newspaper strike and the new leadership of the AFL-CIO in separate segments during its June telecast on public broadcasting stations.

"Workplace Beat: Covering the Bottom Line" will examine the issues in the 11-month strike and raise the question of how the trend toward media mergers affects workers and the way news is reported. The show will feature interviews with two striking reporters, John Lippert and Kate Desmet, a scab reporter and Robert Giles, publisher of the Detroit News.

The show also reports on the "State of the Unions," a profile of the new leaders of the AFL-CIO and their vision of how to improve conditions for American workers.

Check your local public television station broadcast schedule for air times in your area.

Janitors strike for clean deal in Bay area

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

More than 5,000 janitors in the San Francisco Bay area began selective strikes June 3, affecting some 1,000 work sites, or three-quarters of the office buildings in the region.

"The contractors gave us no choice but to increase the pressure," Service Employees Local 1877 President Mike Garcia told reporters after a strike demonstration in downtown Oakland. "They wouldn't offer anything near an acceptable proposal. We don't believe they are bargaining in good faith, and workers are reporting a campaign of interrogation and threats at work sites."

The union will be conducting strategic strikes, hitting different sites each day with the goal of disrupting the everyday work of contractors until there is an acceptable agreement.

Two months of negotiations between the union and Western Management Alliance, a labor relations consulting firm that represents eight area contract cleaning companies, broke down at the crack of dawn June 1, a few hours after the workers' contract expired.

Later that afternoon, the janitors voted by a 30-to-1 margin to reject the contractors' last proposal and "to take whatever actions necessary to win a better contract and protest the employers' unfair labor practices, up to and including a strike."

The contractors, who employ about 80 percent of the area's union janitors, failed to meet any of the union's master contract demands, including family health insurance, a joint employer-union training trust fund and wage increases that would lift the janitors out of poverty. Approximately two-thirds of the union's members fall below the federal poverty level, according to the union.

The local has received strike sanctions from the South Bay, San Mateo, Alameda and Contra Costa Central Labor Councils. "We are also contacting SEIU locals in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Ore., Seattle and Denver," said Jon Barton, organizing director for the Master Contract Campaign. "The companies that employ our members have branches in those cities, and we are prepared to show them we are united."

In an attempt to divert a strike, the union garnered support from more than 130 religious, political and human rights leaders and organizations and held numerous informational meetings and actions, culminating in a march and rally by some 400 people in downtown Oakland May 30, during which 11 people were arrested for blocking traffic in an act of civil disobedience.

Prior to the Oakland rally, 300 janitors and community supporters took over the "gateway to Silicon Valley" by blocking traffic into San Jose International Airport.

Early into negotiations, the union held information actions at office buildings and high-tech work sites and, along with church and community leaders, requested meetings with client companies, including Kaiser Aluminum, Genentech and Bishop Ranch. The janitors also marched and rallied through the posh downtown district of Palo Alto to the gates of Stanford University, where some Stanford students marched in support of the workers.

Vencor-Hillhaven pacts cap two-year struggle for dignity

Oakland, Calif.

A two-year struggle with the nation's second-largest nursing home chain ended with ratification by Service Employees members of two contracts that provide for a patient care committee, wage increases and organizing rights for nonunion workers.

The contracts cover 2,000 licensed vocational nurses, certified nurse assistants, laundry, dietary and housekeeping workers at 25 Vencor-Hillhaven nursing homes in California. The workers are represented by SEIU Local 22 in Sacramento, Local 250 in Northern California and Local 399 in Southern California.

The labor-management patient care committee will address staffing, training and other issues relating to the quality of care in Vencor homes. Quality care was a top bargaining issue for the union, which had solicited the support of residents' family members and community allies.

"This agreement gives Vencor nursing home workers a greater voice in the decisions that affect their jobs and their patients," said Dave Snapp, SEIU nursing home organizing director. "And it brings to a close a long and intense fight for dignity for workers and residents alike in one of the nation's largest for-profit nursing home chains," he said.

Workers held three separate one-day strikes and 100 were arrested for civil disobedience. Several massive rallies were held, including one that tied up rush-hour traffic in San Francisco's financial district.

"The company left us no choice but to bring public attention to the horrors that workers suffer when they go to work, and as advocates for their patients," said Lisa Hubbard, an SEIU spokeswoman.

Wage increases will average 7 percent each year of the two-and three-year contracts, the highest across-the-board raises ever won for Hillhaven nursing home workers, the union said.

The contract calls for an expedited union election procedure for unorganized workers who want to join the union in 14 nonunion Vencor homes in the state.

Union members who were replaced during one of several strikes will be returned to work.

Half of the members are covered by the three-year contract and the rest by the two-year agreement.

— Muriel H. Cooper

Evidence is strong: America Needs a Raise

By David Kameras

While unionists cheered the House vote to raise the federal minimum wage, the tough upcoming debate in the Senate is being distorted by a flurry of assertions, not all of them from the right wing, that happy days are here again.

Several recent reports, including one by the president's Council of Economic Advisers, purport to challenge the idea that American living standards are declining.

But according to Jared Bernstein of the Economic Policy Institute, "they each serve to obscure the simple truth that hourly wage rates have fallen for most American workers." While the studies examine other indicators, "in the final analysis, none of these indicators goes to the heart of the matter," he said.

That continuing decline in buying power was underscored by the most recent statistics on real weekly earnings, which declined 0.4 percent in April. Real weekly earnings were down 0.1 percent since April 1995 and off a whopping 12 percent since April 1979, said AFL-CIO economist Anne Draper.

"Figuring in inflation, this means that workers who received $288.35 a week in April 1979 were making $253.75 in April 1996, in constant 1982 dollars," Draper said.

"Despite the growth in white-collar jobs and average compensation, and despite wage mobility, most workers have been losing ground since the late 1970s," Bernstein said. "Until we address this reality, the anxiety of American workers will continue to be justified."

The CEA study purports to show that most of the employment growth in the last three years has been in sectors paying wages above the median. "However, the CEA analysts have no way of knowing what the 'new' jobs actually pay," Bernstein said. They only can measure growth in occupation and industry groupings from one time period to the next. High-turnover sectors, where similar numbers of jobs were added and lost, would be off the radar screen.

The report does recognize there are serious problems in income distribution and job security, and notes that the Clinton administration presided over creation of 8.5 million jobs since 1993, with little or no increase in the share of part-time work. Further, median family income rose and poverty fell in 1994, the first such improvements in five years, noted AFL-CIO economists Draper and Bill Cunningham.

However, while failing to look at the deterioration in real income in each occupation, the CEA concluded that wage decline is no longer a problem, "a serious distortion of the facts," the federation economists say. "In fact, only three of 15 occupational categories had both job gains and real income gains. Employment in occupations with real income losses accounted for 92 percent of all job gains, with only 8 percent of jobs created in occupations with real income gains."

The National Association of Manufacturers sought to further obscure the issue by stating that overall compensation for workers has grown. But that analysis was misleading because it used averages during a period of increasing inequality, when median compensation would more truly reflect the labor market, Bernstein said.

NAM also maintained that "taxes, particularly payroll taxes, account for much of the slowdown in compensation growth." Yet a new study reveals that entitlement programs hidden in the tax code, most of which go to corporations and the wealthy, will cost $455 billion during the current fiscal year, three times the budget deficit.

Giveaways like tax breaks for certain industries and investments, loopholes, write-offs and accelerated depreciation cost the federal government 2.5 times as much as direct means-tested entitlements like welfare and Medicaid.

"A Congress that is eager to challenge low-income welfare entitlements ought to be at least as tough — if not tougher — on welfare entitlements for the well-heeled and politically powerful if it truly wants to bring the budget deficit under control," said Robert McIntyre, director of Citizens for Tax Justice, which prepared the report.

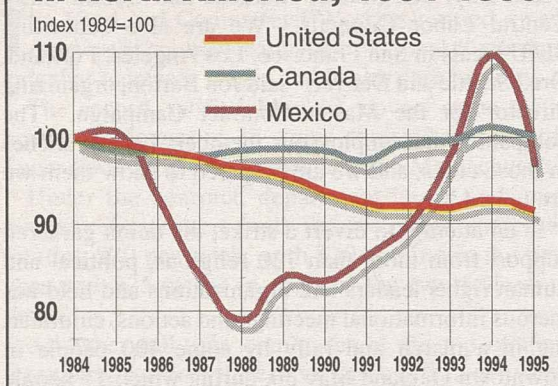
Business interests are spending some $40 million to counter the AFL-CIO campaign to give America a raise, including $1 million recently spent by the National Restaurant Association, a vociferous critic of raising the minimum wage.

"How do you justify spending $1 million to stop the lowest-paid people in our nation from getting a pay increase?" Illinois AFL-CIO President Donald A. Johnson asked the Chicago Sun-Times.

The American people apparently are not buying the corporate line. A USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll found that 81 percent support the Democratic effort to raise the federal minimum wage to $5.15 an hour. A Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll pegged support at 77 percent. And a Peter D. Hart Research poll found 68 percent want a "straight up-or-down vote now" on the issue.

DATA

Real average earnings in North America, 1984-1995



Real earnings in the three NAFTA countries are below what they were in 1984, but none have fallen so precipitously as those in the United States. Despite a moderate rate of inflation during that period, real earnings of U.S. workers in 1995 were 8.5 percent lower than 1984 levels. Canadian real earnings began to recover by 1995, but were still 0.4 percent lower than 1984. In Mexico, the financial crisis of 1995 sent real earnings plummeting.

Merchandise Trade Deficit (Census Basis)	
March	$8.9 billion
February	$9.5 billion
Unemployment Rate	
April	5.4 percent
April (Total Affected)	9.7 percent
March	5.6 percent
Real Weekly Earnings	
April	-0.4 percent
April '95-April '96	-0.1 percent
Since April '79	-12 percent
Consumer Prices (CPI-W)	
April	+0.4 percent
March	+0.5 percent
Producer Prices (Finished Goods)	
April	+0.4 percent
March	+0.5 percent

AFL-CIO NEWSGRAFIC

Workers struggle in wake of NAFTA

U.S. trade deficit heads for another record shortfall

Mexico continued to be a drain on U.S. jobs and prosperity with a $3.7 billion quarterly goods deficit, as evidence mounted that the nature of work has changed for the worse throughout North America.

On a seasonally adjusted, balance-of-payments basis, the overall deficit in goods in March took a huge $2.2 billion jump to $14.8 billion. The continued poor showing "points to another record year of trade deficits for 1996," predicted Greg Woodhead, an economist with the AFL-CIO Task Force on Trade.

A preliminary report by the North American Free Trade Agreement's Commission on Labor Cooperation found a decline in workers with one full-time, permanent job in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

This has led to fewer employees "working a standard 40-48-hour workweek, with more workers working either shorter or longer working hours." In fact, the largest category of growth over the 1984-1994 period was those working in excess of 48 hours a week.

Employment for the decade grew the most in Mexico, by 3.4 percent, compared with 1.6 percent and 1.5 percent in the United States and Canada, respectively. However, "effectively, Mexican workers cannot 'afford' to be unemployed, due in part to the absence of unemployment insurance," the report said. "Mexico has a higher share of workers earning the minimum wage or less and a higher proportion of workers working less than 15 hours per week."

The comparative profile also noted that Mexico's labor market features two distinct sectors, one of which is characterized by informal vocations such as unpaid family work, self-employment and employment in micro-enterprises. This sector alone accounted for an estimated 38 percent of total employment in 1988.

Despite Mexico's well-publicized economic woes, it was workers in the United States that of the three NAFTA countries took the largest beating in real average weekly earnings from 1984 to 1995, with an 8.5 percent decline.

Amid moves to expand NAFTA's reach throughout Latin America, the Canadian government came under attack from trade unionists angered by its inaction toward strengthening the pact's existing labor side agreements in its talks with Chile.

"We can right some of NAFTA's serious problems, including (its effect of) encouraging investment to locate where work and environmental standards are the lowest," said Robert White, a member of a delegation of labor and environmental activists who visited Chile at the invitation of Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, that country's central labor body. "If we have any integrity, here's a chance for Canada to put on the table a proposal for worker rights and environmental rights."

Canadian officials argue that toughened labor standards would scare Chile away from an expanded pact and are unnecessary due to the use of "best practices" by Canadian employers there, despite evidence of harassment of union activists and safety lapses. "This is not an example of best practices," said Gerry Barr, an international affairs representative of the Steelworkers. "The Canada-Chile labor negotiations leave Chilean workers fully exposed."

"We're not saying Canada should not enter into a trade agreement with Chile," White said. "We're saying there should be full public input."

Similarly, Peter Allgeier, assistant U.S. trade representative for the Western Hemisphere, has called for consultation with and input from labor ministers when their trade counterparts devise an agenda for talks leading to a Free Trade Area of the Americas by 2005.

The U.S. trade deficit in goods for the first quarter of the year was $32.4 billion, close to the $35.2 billion scored during the same period of 1995. Imports accounted for 25.8 percent of non-oil goods, up sharply from 18.6 percent at the start of the economic expansion in 1991.

Feeding the import frenzy is the stronger dollar, which over the preceding year gained 28 percent against the Japanese yen and 8 percent against the German mark, effectively lowering the prices of goods from those countries.

Sizable quarterly deficits also were recorded with Japan ($11.8 billion), China ($7 billion), Canada ($4.5 billion), Germany ($3.1 billion), the newly industrialized countries of the Pacific Rim ($2.4 billion) and the European Union ($1.6 billion).

Among the hardest-hit sectors were vehicles ($12.9 billion), clothing and footwear ($10.2 billion), data processing and office machinery ($5.5 billion), electrical machinery ($5.3 billion), consumer electronics ($2.6 billion), toys and sporting goods ($1.8 billion), iron and steel products ($1.6 billion) and furniture and bedding ($1.4 billion).

— David Kameras

Workers' voices on the air

Look out, Rush Limbaugh, radio is taking new turn

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Workers are talking and people are listening. The medium is radio.

In the past 10 years, labor radio programs have grown from just a few to literally dozens. The programs vary in format and length but all have one thing in common — union and nonunion workers are turning on and tuning in.

Virtually all (99 percent) U.S. homes have radios, with most homes averaging more than five radios, including automobiles. Television is in 98 percent of homes, with an average of 1.8 sets per home, according to the National Association of Broadcasters.

"Talk radio has tremendous potential, but the volume of disinformation, bigotry and violent rhetoric that is produced on it undermines that potential," said Steven Rendall, senior analyst at Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting and author of "The Way Things Aren't: Rush Limbaugh's Reign of Error."

Worker-friendly radio programs countering the ultra-conservative Limbaugh/Newt Gingrich variety include Working Stiff in Las Vegas, Worklore in Culver City, Calif., Labor Works in Washington, America at Work in New York City, Labor Express in Chicago and America's Workforce in Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Wisconsin and shortly in Virginia.

UAW buys into network

The UAW is investing several million dollars in United Broadcasting Network, which has signed up radio talk show hosts and commentators Jim Hightower and Chuck Harder. The network, which is committed to presenting pro-worker viewpoints, has 300 affiliated stations in small- and medium-sized markets and hopes to expand into major markets. A recent survey of 3,000 people by the newsletter Talk Daily ranks Harder among the top 10 radio talk show hosts, edging out Oliver North. "Harder has got some guts and raises issues the others don't talk about," said UAW spokesman Frank Joyce.

With a field led by traditional conservatives like Paul Harvey, Hightower also is offering a welcome dose of pro-worker information to listeners in his AFL-CIO-sponsored commentaries. Hightower says it's obvious to anyone who spins the dial that there are only two viewpoints — right wing and further right wing.

"That's why I'm proud of this new effort with UBN and the UAW and pleased to join it," Hightower explained. "We can't just sit around and whine. We have to figure out a way to become the media."

Award-winner in Missouri

Heartland Labor Forum, one of the first labor radio programs, is sponsored by the University of Missouri and Long View Community College and produced by volunteers from unions in Kansas City.

The program addresses such issues as the "right-to-work" assault on workers, safety and health, prison labor and labor history and culture. "The neat thing about our show, is how it brings together so many unions and issues," said Judy Ancel, director of the University of Missouri's Institute of Labor Studies and a producer for the show.

"The labor community is very generous at underwriting the show so we have total control over what we do and how it's presented," she said.

The show, which airs on KKFI-FM, twice has won International Labor Communications Association film and broadcast awards. The show is scheduled in two-month blocks with programming formats that including magazines and features, Ancel said.

Talking Unions, a talk show on WHAT-AM in Philadelphia, started out once a month last year and is now once a week. "Everyone is defining us except us," said Food and Commercial Workers Local 1776 President Wendell W. Young III, host of the show.

Labor program producers and hosts agree radio is a much more democratic medium. It allows a one-to-one relationship with listeners who can call in and express their views either to the host directly or to a producer.

Gaining listeners, advertising

With theme music from reggae composer Peter Tosh called "Stand Up For Your Rights," the show talks about organizing, collective bargaining and social issues. Many people have even called to find out how they can become union members, said Young. Advertising has quadrupled and five other stations have expressed interest in duplicating the show.

"Our community issues are economic," said WHAT-AM owner Cody Anderson, and "people need to hear about jobs, living standards and all of the historic laws and policies that protect workers."

The Connecticut AFL-CIO launched its first labor talk show, "The AFL-CIO Inside Connection," last March on WATR-AM in Waterbury. The show airs twice a month, reaching some 190,000 listeners.

The March 4 debut program featured AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, who discussed the America Needs a Raise campaign, Union Summer and the Labor '96 campaign.



John Lavin/UFCW

AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee joins Wendell W. Young III on his Talking Unions radio program on WHAT-AM in Philadelphia.

NEWSMAKERS

The L.A. County Federation of Labor elected **Miguel Contreras** executive secretary-treasurer, succeeding **Jim Wood**, who died of cancer in February. Contreras, who had served the L.A. federation for more than eight years as a vice president, is the first Latino to hold the top office. He ran unopposed.

J. Davitt McAteer has been tapped by President Clinton to be Labor Department solicitor, a position McAteer has held in an acting capacity since January. He also has been serving as head of the Mine Safety and Health Administration; a replacement at MSHA has not been announced. McAteer previously worked for the Mine Workers.

AWARDS

Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, received the Mary McLeod Bethune-William DuBois 1996 Award for excellence in the labor movement from the Bethune-DuBois Fund. Johnson, an AFL-CIO vice president, also is a vice president of the Electronic Workers.

The **Teamsters** have received the Samuel Gompers American Red Cross National Labor Award for their voluntary relief efforts during numerous disasters, such as the Oklahoma City bombing and summer hurricanes. The award usually goes to an individual, but because of the collective actions of so many IBT members, the Red Cross decided to recognize the international union.

DEATH

Olga Marie Madar, the first woman to hold a vice presidency in the UAW and the first president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, died May 16 in Detroit of heart complications and cancer. She was 80.

"Throughout her long career, Olga was a tireless fighter for workers' rights, for the rights of women, minorities and senior citizens," UAW President Stephen Yokich said. "She was an important presence in our union, in the metropolitan Detroit community and in the progressive movement in our country. Her loss will be deeply felt."

She started at a summer job on an assembly line at Chrysler Corp. before the plant was unionized, noting she was hired in part because she could play softball, at a time when others were being laid off — which inspired her to trade unionism. During her career, she directed numerous departments of the UAW, sat on its board and helped found CLUW in 1974. She also was active in civic and community affairs.

— Compiled by Colleen M. O'Neill

UNION NEWS

Three on boycott list

Two hotels and a milk brand have been added to the AFL-CIO's roll of the least-wanted.

At the request of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Waterbury, Conn., has been placed on the federation's national boycott list. Seven years ago, the hotel fired employees for union activity. In 1995, the National Labor Relations Board ordered a second election, won by the union, 83-44. However, the hotel refuses to bargain with the workers and has not rehired the fired workers.

Another hotel added was the Kauai Resort in Hawaii, where members of Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Local 142 have been locked out since Jan. 1. Despite major wage concessions offered by the union, the hotel wants deeper cuts, including the elimination of family medical coverage.

Also to be avoided is Farmland Dairy Milk, which distributes milk to stores including D'Agostinos, Foodtown/Edwards, Grand Union, Pathmark and Waldbaum's throughout Connecticut, New Jersey and New York. The Teamsters sought the boycott to apply pressure on management to end a six-month-old strike.

Novelty Workers elect Ruiz

Delegates to the Novelty and Production Workers' 18th convention elected leaders, endorsed the Clinton-Gore ticket and raised monthly per capita.

Meeting in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., the 150 members elected Hermes Ruiz to his first full five-year term as president, a position he was selected for by the union's executive board in March 1995. Maria Busillo succeeded the retiring Dennis Mascolo, while Rocco Miranti, Joseph Nardnoe Jr., Antonio Patino, Mark Spano, Jeff Kenting and Sal Spolleta were elected to serve on the board.

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson urged delegates to help mobilize the electorate, setting sights not only on the White House but also on the House and Senate, taking away control from extremist Republicans "out to wreck worker protections built up over the years and to give tax breaks to the rich while cutting back on Medicare, Medicaid, education and other social programs."

Delegates revised the union's constitution to raise per capital by 75 cents a month.

Milestones for UMWA funds

The Mine Workers celebrated the 50th anniversary of their landmark Health and Retirement Funds on May 29, and marked passage of the $25 million mark in financial aid to unemployed coal miners and family members under its Training and Education Fund, which was established jointly with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association.

UMWA President Cecil Roberts and Vice President Jerry Jones were joined by Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) and health and retirement fund beneficiaries for the anniversary celebration at UMWA headquarters.

Some 100,000 retired coal miners, widows and dependents have received more than $15 billion in pensions and health benefits since the funds were established in 1946 as the first such industrywide funds.

Roberts also traveled to Charleston, W.Va., May 20 to congratulate Jennifer Perdue, whose tuition payments from the training fund put it over $25 million in disbursements. Perdue, whose father is a laid-off coal miner, graduated with a 3.5 grade-point average from Marshall University in Huntington.

ILWU goes public

The Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union distributed leaflets May 30 in communities all along the West Coast to pitch their case for keeping ports public and prosperous.

The union is concerned with "port privatization schemes that displace family- and community-supporting jobs with cut-rate, low-wage operations," President Brian McWilliams said. "Worse, various bills are working their way through Congress that would wreak havoc on American workers and port communities."

Public ports account for 15.3 million jobs, $522.9 billion in personal income, $1,607.2 billion in business sales, $780 billion of the GDP and $209.8 billion in taxes, according to the American Association of Port Authorities.



Photos by Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography



More than 2,500 workers in Las Vegas May 30 joined AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, Food and Commercial Workers President Douglas H. Dority and human rights advocate Harry Wu, speaking at left, to protest Wal-Mart's importation of Chinese-made products. The AFL-CIO has called for a boycott of all Chinese-made goods during June. Trumka testified June 6 before two Senate committees against most-favored-nation trading status for China.
(See story, Page 4).

Union Summer set in motion

Continued from Page 1

have to make a difference in the social and economic outcome in our country.

Activists also will lend a hand in working in several ongoing campaigns such as "America Needs a Raise," voter registration, living wage battles and boycotts.

"This isn't your typical work-in-an-office type of summer experience," said Union Summer Director Andy Levin. "This is a summer of planning, phone-calling, organizing, door-knocking and demonstrating. And believe me, the interest is there."

The Union Summer office, a storefront structure in the lobby of the AFL-CIO headquarters, received almost 200 applications on June 1 — the application deadline date. The office received a total of 3,300 applications from children of union members, college students and young workers, representing a diverse cross-section of today's work force — women, people of color and immigrants.

"Our site coordinators are raving about the quality of participants showing up," said Levin. "They are eager to learn and make a contribution. In the field, there is a feeling that 'we are a part of an historic event,' " he said.

"Our people are so excited that they want to come in before the start date," said Renaye Manley, one of two Chicago site coordinators. "The unions are excited, too, because they want to play a role in inspiring people to have a commitment to labor," she said.

Much of the activity in the state will revolve around the health care industry and a joint community-labor campaign to pass a citywide ordinance for a living wage, which Sweeney helped kick off during the "America Needs a Raise" event in late May.

In Georgia, activists will help organize state workers in an effort to fight against privatization by Gov. Zell Miller (D), who, after wooing union voters, is trying to give away their jobs.

The governor supported legislation to privatize prisons and the Georgia War Veterans Home, according to Stewart Acuff, president of the Atlanta Labor Council. Members of Service Employees Local 1985 feel betrayed.

"Workers will be put out of jobs," he said, "and those that aren't will see lower wages and benefits."

In South Carolina, activists will be working in coalition with the Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment to help the Operating Engineers win a contract at the Melrose Resort in Hilton Head. This is the first resort on the upscale island to unionize and provide an opportunity for workers to receive fair wages, benefits and dignity.

"Who would have thought that in South Carolina — a 'right-to-work' state — that labor and community groups would come together," said Simon Greer, the site coordinator. "When I look around at the 15 people we have from Union Summer and 75 percent of them are women and people of color and young, I say 'that's the labor movement —a union for all people,' " he said.

Union Summer workers in Boston will find themselves faced with one of several "living wage" initiatives being proposed by cities and community activists across the country. These initiatives usually require city contractors or those doing business with the cities to pay wages that will pull families out of poverty.

Unionists also will train to work in campaigns to organize hospital workers, city employees and laundry workers in Boston who are being paid low wages and lack decent benefits.

"It's basically a sweatshop environment," said Carole Allen, the Massachusetts site coordinator, describing the laundry facility. "The workers do laundry for hotels and hospitals. They aren't given safety equipment such as gloves when dealing with laundry from the hospitals and there is no heat or air conditioning where they work."

In Denver, activists will work with SEIU members in their Justice for Janitors campaign, support the Denver Post boycott and work with AFSCME on their public employees ballot initiative.

Union Summer workers in Miami will urge residents to cancel their subscriptions to The Miami Herald, the flagship publication of Knight-Ridder, one half of the newspaper ownership that forced workers to strike at the Detroit newspapers.

Boycott activities also are planned in Oakland against the Lafayette Park Hotel.

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 11 JUNE 10, 1996

INSIDE

LEGISLATION

1 *House heeds call for minimum raise*



McGuire Photography/USWA

Steelworkers drop the "black flag" on Bridgestone/Firestone at Indy 500 pre-race rally to draw attention to the company's refusal to negotiate a fair contract.
See UNION NEWS, Page 11.

UNION NEWS

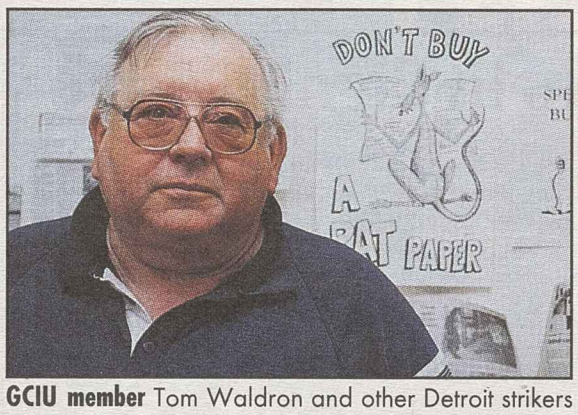
13 *Detroit strikers raise volume in struggle*

UNION YES

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GCIU member Tom Waldron and other Detroit strikers remain resolute. **See story, Page 12.**

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 12 JULY 1, 1996

Union Summer heat wave makes splash

By Muriel H. Cooper

The first wave of the AFL-CIO's Union Summer is still reverberating around the nation, leaving its mark on young activists and the communities they've sought to energize.

From Boston and Seattle to Watsonville, Calif., and Miami, young people gained insight into unions, community coalitions and the value in empowering workers. Unions and community groups got a taste of their future.

"We found the diversity that unions are seeking in Union Summer," confirmed Carole Allen, the Boston site coordinator who led the young activists to work with community coalitions and union organizing drives.

Some of the campaigns were specifically targeted to union organizing. In Los Angeles, for example, the activists were part of the push to enroll county home care workers in the Service Employees Local 434B. The workers are among the lowest paid of all county workers, and an organizing victory is the first step toward winning better wages and working conditions.

The participants conducted home visits, leafleted and did some flat-out campaigning.

"These students and activists are participating in an historic effort," said Ophelia McFadden, general manager of the local.

"Not since Freedom Summer (which Union Summer is patterned after) and the voter registration drives in the South during the 1960s have young people played such an important role for change," she said.

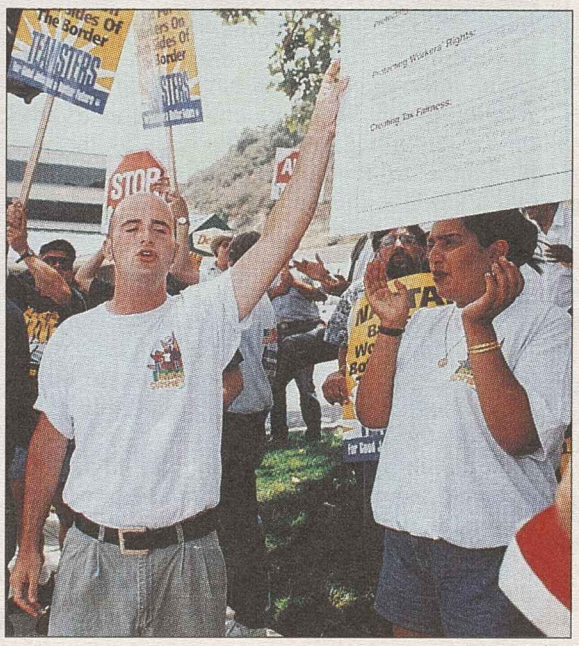
As in Boston, workers in Akron and St. Louis worked with community and neighborhood groups, churches and various coalitions to forge permanent relationships among workers and their communities.

"It is essential that we work with community groups," said Andrea Staples, site coordinator for Akron, which hosted an all-female contingent. "There is no way to build this type of power for the average working person without the community. They are a vital link."

The Akron activists helped SEIU Local 1199 kick off SCORE (Summit County Organizing For Rights and Equality), a countywide effort to bring community problems to the attention of local businesses.

"We have to make demands on folks who are

Continued on Page 6



IBT photo

Union Summer activists in San Diego to work on California's minimum wage initiative join Teamsters at a rally to oppose lifting a ban on unsafe Mexican trucks. **See story, Page 4.**

Lessons learned on the doorstep

Union Summer activists in Akron and Boston hit the streets armed with maps and handouts to conduct house visits. It was a new experience for the visitors and many of the visited, but there were rewards for both all along the way.

The house visits in both cities were designed to build community and labor coalitions and encourage residents to take an active role in their communities.

"We feel if we can organize communities to stand up for themselves, eventually they will see the importance of organizing where they work," said Betty Gray, who is working with Union Summer participants in Akron as a member of SCORE (Summit County Organizing For Rights and Equality), which is affiliated with Service Employees Local 1199.

"If they can take on power where they live, they can take on power where they work," she said.

Labor and community activists share common problems — low wages leading to the deterioration of neighborhoods, the sense of isolation from the mainstream and the knowledge that in numbers there is strength.

"Union Summer has given us additional resources to reach the community," said Joyce Campbell of Boston ACORN (A Community Organization On Reform Now). "We're trying to get people involved in the living wage campaign. We want to know their concerns and ideas.

"Our resources don't allow us to reach every-

Continued on Page 6

Town hall meetings elevate debate on wages

By David Kameras

The AFL-CIO completed a series of 29 town hall meetings with another round of powerful testimony plainly showing the challenges facing today's workers.

At the meeting in San Jose, Calif., Imelda, a Mexican immigrant, told of how she once provided care for an 82-year-old woman who lives by herself. But earning $4.25 an hour two hours a day and being eight months pregnant, she had no one to attend to her daughter and is now out of work.

"When I used to take care of this woman, my work reflected compassion and quality, but this doesn't seem to mean anything in the labor market," she told the gathering, which included AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

Billie Anne Martin, a single mother now off welfare and employed as a county eligibility worker, said one of her paychecks goes for the rent, the rest to necessities, and even that is threatened by Republican Gov. Pete Wilson's bill to contract out government work.

"The safety net of the American working class and the meager benefits for the disadvantaged are being slowly carved away," she said, noting that a local center that houses disabled children is being closed by the year 2000. "I'd like to know where these children are going to go and what kind of benefits they're going to receive."

"When we see where CEO salaries in the last 15

Continued on Page 5



Steve Miller/Miller Photography

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney took the America Needs A Raise campaign to Wall Street June 6.

ORGANIZING

Nurses vote AFSCME

Nurses working at seven Sharp Healthcare Systems facilities in the San Diego area voted 1,111-622 in favor of union representation.

The nurses' unit will become an affiliate of AFSCME's United Nurses Associations of California.

The win is especially noteworthy because the nation's largest for-profit hospital chain, anti-union Columbia HCA, is in the process of acquiring Sharp, which it plans to run as a "joint partnership."

Organizing issues included the quality of patient care and the role of nurses as patient advocates.

IBEW turns on juice

The Electrical Workers have been busy targeting nonunion contractors in a massive organizing effort employing salting, radio ads and newsletters.

A recent market survey in Tacoma, Wash., shows that nonunion employers are doing 50 percent less work. In addition, four workers were stripped from a nonunion contract — and these new members, qualified electricians all, now are bringing customers to union contractors.

Salts are actively working in Savannah, Ga., while IBEW Local 124 in Missouri is sending monthly newsletters to key nonunion workers pointing out the union advantage. Local 532 in Billings, Mont., has bought radio air time to participate in the organizing push.

Big cheese win

An energetic in-plant organizing team and strong community support is credited for more than 300 workers voting for the Machinists at the Beatrice Cheese Company in Mayville, Wis.

Campaign issues included a higher level of respect and fairness for workers and their families. Families in the community supported the workers' efforts by putting "Union Yes" lawn signs around the town.

Pilots fly with IBT

Capping a three-year effort, pilots at Southern Air Transport have voted for Teamsters representation.

The company's flight engineers first voted for IBT representation in 1994. The newest IBT members fly cargo worldwide, including into "hot spots" under contract to the U.S. military.

"Southern Air Transport pilots risk their lives flying missions all over the globe and deserve decent pay and work rules they can live with," said IBT President Ron Carey.

Meanwhile, stock clerks at the Phoenix-based America West Airlines want the same rights and dignity that the company's mechanics sought and have filed authorization cards for IBT representation. In April, the mechanics won a hard-fought campaign for union representation.

Teamsters make grade

In Los Angeles, classified supervisors employed by the Unified School District voted 1,129-568 for Teamsters representation.

The supervisors include plant managers, bus supervisors, office managers, cafeteria supervisors and others — more than 216 job categories in all — employed as both blue- and white-collar workers.

During the campaign, workers spoke out for protection against "outsourcing" of their jobs by the district and the possible effects of a district breakup.

UAW makes inroads

The UAW has been recognized as the bargaining agent for two Johnson Controls Inc. plants. The company is an auto component supplier.

The move was seen as an important victory for the union in its bid to organize employees of independent auto suppliers.

UAW also has set its sights on organizing nonunion workers at Warren, Mich.-based supplier Dana Corp. The union's plans to organize at least four Dana plants and its efforts at Johnson Controls are part of a quest to regain thousands of jobs lost in recent years to nonunion suppliers, where wages and benefits are less than those offered by the Big Three automakers.

Hot dog! It's IUE

Workers at Thornapple Valley, a division of Dixie Foods in Forrest City, Ark., voted for representation by the Electronic Workers.

The unit, which makes Wilson franks and hot dogs, will be chartered as Local 1108.

Company objections blocked the April certification of IUE. Rather than permit allegations to delay the employees' right to representation, the union agreed to rerun the election in late June, winning with an 84-11 vote.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper

L.A. harbor truckers in dignity drive

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Striking truck drivers in the Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor area, with the backing of the Communications Workers, have taken their struggle against harbor trucking companies to the courts.

CWA Local 9400 organized the 6,000 drivers in April, but the companies have refused to recognize the union. The local filed suit June 11 charging Fritz Domestic Transportation Services and Sankyu U.S.A. Inc. with ignoring federal regulations by using unauthorized drivers for hauling foods that the U.S. Customs Service has not yet inspected.

The trucking companies have a long history of refusing to hire bona fide employees as its truck drivers, according to the union. Instead, the companies use drivers they call "independent contractors." The U.S. Customs Service explicitly forbids use of independent contractors from performing Customs work.

"The trucking companies can't have it both ways," said CWA Local 9400 President Tony Bixler. "When it comes time to get a Customs ID Card, these companies suddenly claim that the drivers are employees, as their Customs ID Cards reflect. Yet the trucking companies avoid recognizing these drivers as employees, don't pay all the local, state and federal employee taxes and provide the drivers with 1099s claiming these drivers are owner-operators."

The mostly Latino drivers were seeking higher wages, benefits and union representation when they joined the CWA. The harbor trucking companies are denying them by claiming the drivers are independent contractors who lease their services and tractors.

When the companies fired some of the workers and suspended others, a company called the Transport Maritime Association stepped forward to deal with the truckers.

The owner of the firm told the drivers they could organize with CWA and achieve higher wages and better benefits if they gave up their independent status and joined his firm.

The truckers agreed, but the industry now refuses to deal with TMA because its drivers are union, according to the company.

"Sometimes we worked 14 to 17 hours a day," Eduardo Gonzalez said, but "we want a 40-hour work week. If not, we at least want overtime after 40 hours."

With a gross salary of $700 a week after 10 years on the job, Gonzalez has to support his wife and three children on a little more than $400 after paying taxes and insurance. "Now, they got me out of the company because I tried to get a union," he said.

"We just want a better job and benefits for our families," Gonzalez asserted. "We want to be regular employees, not independent employees."

CWA picketing, though limited by a court order to 10 per terminal, will continue no matter what happens to Transport Maritime Association, said Mark Bixler, vice president of Local 9400.

"We started our organizing drive 20 months ago, long before TMA came on the scene," he said. "The union also will file more complaints with the National Labor Relations Board, trying to get drivers designated as direct employees of the trucking companies rather than owner-operators."

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LEGISLATION



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Some 2,500 AFGE members rallied on the west steps of the U.S. Capitol June 26 to let lawmakers know that attacks on federal workers, privatization efforts, government shutdowns and slashing vital government services will be "remembered in November." The crowd chanted, "we'll be back to help them pack." The rally capped the union's legislative conference, which included an address by Vice President Gore.

Crucial legislative battles loom

By Mike Hall

Congressional fireworks over the minimum wage and the so-called TEAM Act are set to go off when the Senate returns from its July 4 recess.

Leaders of both parties agreed on a deal to bring the controversial items to the floor July 8 and 9. Similar bills were approved earlier this year in the House.

The AFL-CIO, which launched a new series of radio and television ads June 27 to stop the deep Medicare cuts proposed by GOP leaders, also will be cranking up its grass-roots operation to support an increase in the minimum wage from its current $4.25 to $5.15, and to oppose the company union bill.

The Medicare ads are running in 20 congressional districts, while minimum wage ads will air in 11 districts. Both are part of the AFL-CIO's continuing educational campaign for working families.

When the minimum wage bill hits the floor, each side will be allowed one amendment. The Democrats will offer an amendment to eliminate from the bill the House-passed provision that exempts restaurant workers from the pay raise.

The GOP plans to offer a measure that would exempt tens of thousands of businesses and millions of workers from the wage increase requirements. The House defeated a similar exemption.

When the Senate finishes the minimum wage, it will turn its attention to the TEAM Act, which unions have denounced as a ploy by employers to establish company unions.

When Congress returns, workers can make their voices heard by calling 1-800/96AFL-CIO. Tell your senators to support the minimum wage increase, but oppose its small business exemption. And tell them the TEAM Act is an underhanded effort to prevent workers from forming unions.

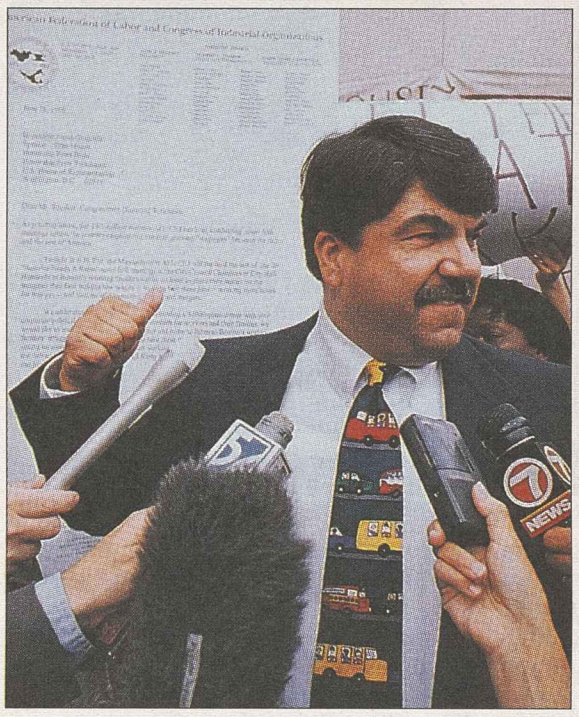
In the Medicare fight, the new ads back up an intensified grass-roots campaign asking Congress not to vote against the interests of older Americans. They highlight GOP leaders' votes to eviscerate Medicare last year and focus attention on the current debate.

"Working and retired families know that the Republican congressional leaders are using double talk in saying they're 'slowing the growth' of Medicare, not cutting," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

The ads point out that members of Congress voted to make devastating cuts in Medicare in 1995, totaling $270 billion, at the same time $245 billion in tax cuts would have gone mostly to the wealthy. The bill was lambasted by the public and vetoed by President Clinton.

"Medicare is our parents' livelihood," Sweeney said. "It deserves responsible attention to preserve it. The Republican cuts would completely change the entire Medicare system," Sweeney said.

The spots close by urging listeners to call their congressional representatives and urge them "not to destroy Medicare — and tell them, this time we're watching."



Marilyn Humphries/Impact Visuals

In Boston, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka continues labor's counteroffensive against GOP attacks. In front of TV's famed "Cheers" tavern, Trumka points to an invitation for House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and two Bay State congressmen to trade their $1,000-a-plate fund-raiser with corporate big shots and "come listen to Boston's working families" at an America Needs A Raise town hall meeting June 18. **See story, Page 5.**

CAPITOL DIGEST

Masked like a bandit, the "Workers Right to Know Act" was unveiled at a House hearing packed with anti-worker witnesses.

The bill is "part of an orchestrated assault on America's unions in retaliation for our new vigilance and vitality on behalf of U.S. working families," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said in a statement.

The Republican-controlled Employer-Employee Relations Committee presented half a dozen witnesses in support of H.R. 3580, but only allowed two slots for opposing views.

"Congress has entered the silly season," Rep. Matthew G. Martinez (D-Calif.) told the committee. "Republicans express grave concerns about the rights of union members. Anyone who actually believes that should have their head examined."

Current law, established in a Supreme Court decision, Communications Workers vs. Beck, sets the ground rules on how agency fee payers may object to use of their fees for other than non-collective bargaining expenses. Agency fee payers are those who don't want to join the union but still benefit from its collective bargaining protections.

H.R. 3580 would expand the Beck decision to all union members while extending onerous new reporting regulations on unions, costing millions of dollars.

CWA attorney James B. Coppess said the bill goes far beyond current law by requiring new extensive and intensive disclosure and reporting requirements on unions that could cost as much as $200 million a year.

"It's a punitive measure meant to silence the organized voice of working Americans, he said.

Elsewhere on the Hill:

BUDGET — After ironing out a few differences, the House and Senate, by mostly party-line votes, passed the 1997 fiscal year budget resolution that would make deep cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. While the nonbinding resolution is similar to last year's GOP plan, it did reject House provisions to repeal the Davis-Bacon and Service Contract acts.

Now Congress turns to the appropriations process, where President Clinton said he would veto the Labor/HHS spending bill because of low funding levels and several riders limiting OSHA and the National Labor Relations Board. The House Appropriations Committee moved that bill June 25. **(See story, Page 4).**

Under the bill, the NLRB faces a 15 percent cut in funds. Some companies also would be exempted from the National Labor Relations Act, and organizing efforts would be hindered by a ban on a proposed NLRB rule on single-location bargaining units.

FAMILY LEAVE — The federation applauded President Clinton's plan to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act by granting up to 24 hours a year for childrens' school activities and family medical needs. Labor urged Clinton to go further and expand FMLA to cover workers in firms smaller than the current 50-employee threshold.

COMP TIME — While not as drastic as GOP proposals to give employers the right to offer compensatory time instead of paid overtime, President Clinton's plan to change the Fair Labor Standards Act's overtime provisions should be rejected, AFL-CIO President Sweeney said.

"Opening up overtime laws to potential abuse is not the solutions to families' needs," Sweeney said.

CHINA MFN — Ignoring China's unfair trade practices and dismal human and worker rights record, the House defeated a move June 27 to deny most-favored-nation trading status, 286-141. The AFL-CIO noted that "in addition to banning independent unions, the Chinese continue to produce and export goods made in their forced labor system."

The House later voted to hold a series of hearings on China's human rights record, its export of weapons to terrorist nations and its trade policies.

— Mike Hall

House panel snags OSHA's budget, rulemaking

By Colleen M. O'Neill

The opponents of strong job safety laws have come calling again with attempts to cut budgets and limit federal agencies.

In a rerun of the nightmarish 1996 budget process, Republican lawmakers intent on hog-tying the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Mine Safety and Health Administration have proposed decreased funding and restrictive riders in Labor\Health and Human Services appropriations legislation.

The Appropriations Committee approved legislation cutting OSHA's budget by $6 million (2 percent), with $5 million coming from enforcement alone.

MSHA also was cut by 2 percent, while funding for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health remained unchanged from the current year. However, President Clinton had sought an additional $32 million to transfer mine safety activities from the now-defunct Bureau of Mines into NIOSH, a sum whose fate remains uncertain. The funds were not included in the panel's bill.

More problematic is the panel's acceptance of an ergonomics rider offered by Rep. Henry Bonilla (R-Texas) that prohibits OSHA from using funds "for the development, promulgation or issuance of any proposed or final standard or guideline regarding ergonomic protection or recording and reporting occupational injuries or illnesses directly related thereto."

The rider is essentially the same as was passed out of the subcommittee in 1995 and accepted by the full House. But that language was rejected by the Senate and by a House-Senate conference committee. Language eventually was accepted that bars the agency from promulgating a rule but allows it to conduct research.

As reported out, the rider would prohibit the agency from even collecting data on ergonomics-related injuries, which account for one-third of all lost-time work injuries in the United States and which forms the fastest-growing category of reported injuries and illnesses.

Cumulative trauma disorders such as carpal tunnel syndrome, repetitive strain injuries, tendinitis and back strains have increased at epidemic rates — some 800 percent in the last decade. In 1994, more than 330,000 new cases were reported to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Bonilla's rider would assure these numbers would disappear — and, according to industry foes led by United Parcel Service, so would the problem.

Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich signaled the administration's disapproval of such a rider in late May, when he said the department would battle to keep OSHA's authority to develop a standard on ergonomics.

Bonilla also gained approval for another rider to soften restrictions on teen-aged workers and dangerous equipment, such as cardboard paper balers used by grocery stores to crush boxes. That measure failed to make it through the House last year as part of the ill-fated effort by House Majority Leader Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) to overthrow laws via "Corrections Days."

The subcommittee's rider states OSHA can use no funds to enforce or issue fines to employers using 16- and 17-year-olds to load such balers that comply with industry standards.

Each year, 70 teens are killed on the job and 200,000 working teens are injured, NIOSH data shows, with the majority of injuries cuts from power-driven meat slicers and knives used to cut cardboard boxes and bruises from slips and falls, using power-driven bakery equipment and balers and working with farm equipment. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of teen workplace deaths, followed by machine-related accidents and electrocutions.



Kaveh Sardari/Page One Photography

Trade unionists demonstrate their support for the Brazilian workers' general strike June 21 with a protest in front of the Brazilian embassy in Washington. Workers in Brazil are seeking a 40-hour week with no pay reduction, an adequate minimum wage, retirement benefits and agrarian reforms. Other demonstrations were held throughout North America in front of Brazilian embassies and consulates. "When it comes to corporate greed, working people everywhere are all in the same boat – and we've got to row hard and bail together or we're all sunk," Teamsters President Ron Carey said in a statement.

NAFTA fallout still hurting workers

Hundreds of Teamsters from Southern California joined Mexican unionists and environmental activists June 18 at a rally in San Diego as government officials from the signatory countries of the North American Free Trade Agreement held hearings to lift a ban on unsafe Mexican trucks.

The rally, held exactly six months after the union convinced the White House to delay implementing the pact's trucking provisions, called attention to the intent of freight companies to use low-paid Mexican drivers to operate poorly maintained trucks from Mexico on U.S. roads.

"We're here today to remind people that the Band-Aid measures government officials are debating behind closed doors won't suddenly make NAFTA OK for truckers," said IBT Freight Director Dennis Skelton. "NAFTA is still bad for freight workers on both sides of the border."

"NAFTA would let companies pit Mexican drivers against U.S. drivers," added Jose Casanova, leader of an organization of Mexican independent operators near the Arizona border. Three other Mexican organizations representing truck drivers and transportation workers also joined the protest.

Meanwhile, a group of labor and human rights organizations has charged that Mexican federal employees are denied the right to associate and organize freely, in violation of the NAFTA side agreement.

The group cited an instance where the government arbitrarily dissolved a trade union of workers in the fishing ministry, saying it represents "a pattern of violations of Mexican labor law" that must be corrected.

The complaint follows a Mexican Supreme Court decision that prohibitions on the formation of more than one public employee union are unconstitutional, but the ruling only applies at the state level.

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich has ordered the office that administers the NAFTA side agreement to report on the implications of the court's decision, and to monitor changes in the country's union registration laws.

Weak enforcement of Mexican labor laws has helped to keep the lid on wages there, which in turn has helped stoke a growing bilateral merchandise trade deficit with the United States. That deficit reached $1.6 billion in April, up from $1.1 billion a month earlier.

The overall U.S. merchandise trade deficit also took a huge leap, from $8.5 billion to $11.4 billion, driven in part by a worsening trade relationship with China.

Unions have accused China of unfair trade policies that, combined with human and worker rights abuses, should disqualify that country from receiving most-favored-nation trade status.

The goods gap with the world's most populous country widened more than $500 million to $2.4 billion. For the year, the deficit is $9.3 billion, $600 million more than a year earlier.

— David Kameras

Sweeney urges ILO to seek child labor ban

By David Kameras

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney urged the International Labor Organization to adopt a convention to ban child labor "in its most dangerous, degrading and exploitative forms."

Addressing a ministerial conference in Geneva, Sweeney said, "At a time when new technologies allow investment to cross national borders with a keystroke on a computer, where capital can shop the world for the least expensive and most vulnerable workers, we must make sure that we continue to honor our human values — the dignity of working men and women and our dreams for our children.

"The challenge of our time is to make sure that every man, woman and child can benefit and not suffer from the new opportunities of global trade and advanced technology," not to let international economic cooperation degenerate "into a race to the bottom," he said.

Sweeney noted that an estimated 200 million children throughout the world are at work, many working under conditions "that should move us to shame, to anger and to action. . . . Children as young as 4, working 15 hours a day, seven days a week. Children scrambling for food, drugged so that they can work longer and faster, bent and cowed and crippled. Treated as chattel, these children are dying from overwork, accidents and starvation."

Support for rights-trade link

The Clinton administration's push at the ILO meeting to establish a clear link between worker rights and international trade when the World Trade Organization has its first ministerial meeting in December garnered support from Canada and some European countries.

With multinational corporations combing the globe for the cheapest labor, Sweeney told meetings of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the British Trade Union Congress that workers must mount a global push for social charters in every trade agreement.

"The issue is not protecting workers' jobs in a few advanced economies," he said. "The issue is defending workers' dignity in every country. And, in that struggle, we must stand together."

"We have seen how international trade has its darker side," said Bill Jordan, general secretary of the ICFTU. "But as the effects of uncontrolled free market forces become more extreme, unions are fighting back."

In other actions, the ILO adopted a convention to improve the rights and conditions of home workers, and condemned Burma for its widespread use of forced labor.

States, cities forge ahead with 'living wage' drives

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The Senate has put legislation to raise the minimum wage on ice until after the July 4 holiday, but the issue is alive and well in cities and states around the country, thanks to the efforts of a coalition including labor, community, religious, minority and women's groups.

The latest successes came in Delaware and Vermont, but workers and their unions also were pushing popular initiatives in California, Oregon, Arizona, Idaho and Montana.

Delaware will raise the state's minimum wage to $5 an hour by 1997. In Vermont the minimum wage will jump to $5 per hour after Jan. 1, 1997, and to $5.15 in 1998.

Delaware's law also provides for a two-step increase in the minimum wage for tipped employees, from $2.23 to $2.32 an hour effective April 15 and $2.50 an hour effective Jan. 1, 1997.

Vermont's legislation raises the minimum wage for workers who earn tips to $2.65 in 1997 and $2.68 in 1998.

This is the first time Delaware has increased its minimum wage since 1991 and marks the first time the state's wage has exceeded the federal minimum wage, which is $4.25 an hour. After months of lobbying, labor prevailed over the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, said Delaware AFL-CIO President Edward J. Peterson.

"When Congress is slow to act, we have to take action on the state and local levels, and that's what we did," Peterson explained.

Delaware has about 14,000 minimum-wage workers, 85 percent of whom are adults and one-third of whom are single heads of households.

Meanwhile, in California, a wage coalition gained enough signatures to get an initiative on the November ballot to increase the state's minimum wage by $1.50 an hour. The measure, which needed 433,269 valid signatures to qualify, exceeded the threshold with almost 550,000 signatures.

The initiative, sponsored by the Living Wage Coalition, would raise the minimum wage from the current $4.25 per hour to $5 per hour in 1997, and to $5.75 per hour in 1998.

Legislation increasing the minimum wage passed in the state Senate but met strong opposition in the Republican-controlled Assembly and was threatened with a veto by GOP Gov. Pete Wilson.

Minimum-wage legislation in Connecticut, Minnesota and New York met similar defeats.

The Connecticut House passed an increase in the minimum wage, but the legislation died after a filibuster in the Senate. The measure would have been met with a veto anyway by GOP Gov. John G. Rowland, who believes the "free market" should set wages, said Janeen Olsen of the Connecticut AFL-CIO.

Minnesota's laissez-faire Republican Gov. Arne Carlson also vetoed an increase in the minimum wage in April. Legislation to increase the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.05 in New York passed in the House and died in the Senate.

Earlier this year, the Massachusetts legislature overrode a veto of legislation that will increase the minimum wage by $1 by 1997.

Forty-three states have minimum wage laws, though only 10 are above the federal standard of $4.25. Generally, states pass higher minimums while citing higher costs of living, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Twenty-five states have laws that mirror the federal law.

However, in the eight states with a minimum wage below the federal minimum, the federal standard preempts the state's, and the state law applies only to such employees as farm workers who are not covered by the federal provision.

The highest current minimum wage is $5.25 an hour, in Hawaii and Washington.

On the local level, labor and its allies are forging ahead with ballot initiatives and legislation to increase the minimum wage. Enough signatures have been secured to put minimum-wage measures on the November ballot in Denver and New Orleans. Other citywide initiatives continue in Chicago, Houston, Albuquerque, N.M., Washington and Boston.

The Denver initiative, which would raise the city's minimum wage to $6.50 an hour in 1997, $6.85 in 1998 and $7.15 in 1999, with subsequent annual cost-of-living increases, was met with resistance in the form of state legislation aimed at stopping locales from raising the minimum wage.

But just days after AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney sent a letter to Democratic Gov. Roy Romer urging him to veto "the cynical, self-serving legislation," Romer killed the bill.

Last year, the Solidarity Sponsoring Committee, a coalition including labor, community and religious organizations, was able to pass a city ordinance in Baltimore requiring all city contractors receiving local government contracts to pay their workers a livable wage of $6.10 per hour.

Trade unionists are lobbying for similar legislation in Milwaukee and New York City.

'The answer to low wages is high wages'

Continued from Page 1

years have increased by 514 percent, and workers' wages haven't even kept up, and with the average CEO of a Fortune 500 company now making over 149 times what the average worker makes, I think it's time to take from the hands of the greedy and put it back into the hands of the needy," added Ray Biosa, a member of Service Employees Local 715, which represents public workers in Santa Clara County.

On June 12, Atlanta was burning again, this time with the fires of indignation over lost jobs and frustrated dreams, as Chavez-Thompson continued the federation's quest for more evidence that America Needs A Raise to present to recalcitrant lawmakers.

When Susan Clayton, a Flight Attendants local president, joined now-grounded ValuJet Airlines, "little did I know I would end up a slave laborer, helping to line the pockets of those people who started the airline with gold."

When not fired for union activities, workers, who were hired through a temp agency owned by the CEO's daughter and ex-wife, were forced to work excessive shifts for substandard pay and buy uniforms from an owner's son-in-law, who "stated we would all be replaced with Coke machines and vending machines if he had his choice," Clayton said. "He said we can strike until we starve."

"Thank God for unions, because with the union, we're able to fight back and work on getting a fair contract," she said.

The Rev. Sandra Robinson, director of the Georgia Citizens Coalition on Hunger, reminded the meeting that many of the people on public assistance are workers, including "single men who have become homeless because they are being exploited by labor pools, because they are being paid minimum wage, and then they're being deducted for helmets, and deducted for boots, and deducted for transportation, and deducted for a $2 baloney sandwich, and then at the end of the day, they don't have enough to take care of their own human needs."

At a June 13 meeting in Pittsburgh, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka heard 51-year-old Sandra Israel tell how her age prevents her from finding new employment after losing her job of 15 years. "I am a black American woman standing here asking you to join in, that we don't have to take a $5-an-hour job."



Marilyn Humphries/Impact Visuals

The Rev. Edward Boyd tells the Boston town hall meeting that "we have seen a split between the privileged and the rest of us." AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka hosted the June 18 meeting.

Bea Sutton is a licensed practical nurse who was permanently replaced by a nursing-home facility operated by notoriously anti-union Beverly Enterprises after protesting unfair labor practices.

"Fighting a large corporation like Beverly is really tough, but we get more determined every day that we are going to win," she said. "This is not just a Beverly worker fight. This is a fight to maintain the dignity, the rights and the respect for all workers. We cannot allow the large corporations to continue to put profits before people."

Tom Pegler stayed home for two years to take care of his children so that his wife could get off welfare and go to school. But then she became too ill to work, a child became ill as well, and he went back to work double-time. "It's very, very hard to work two minimum-wage jobs and be able to be home with your sick family," he noted.

"The answer to low wages is high wages," Steelworkers President George F. Becker said. "So why don't we have high wages? Well, when 85 percent of the work force in America is unorganized, 85 percent of the wages and the salaries in America are unilaterally set by companies whose best interest is to keep it as low as the marketplace will allow it to be."

House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and two Massachusetts GOP congressmen were in Boston June 18 for a $1,000-a-plate dinner with their corporate backers when the final town hall meeting was being held there, and Trumka invited them "to give up that dinner and come to listen to Boston's working families' struggles. This will enable you to take these stories back to Congress before voting on more cuts in programs that hurt working families to give another tax break to the rich and special interests."

Had they attended, they would have heard from:

- A Chinese immigrant who, after seven years of working 12-hour days, six days a week in restaurants, now works in a community association trying to change working conditions.
- A 13-year transit worker who is the sole supporter for a disabled husband and three children, and two paychecks away from homelessness.
- A service worker who works up to seven days a week to raise her four children on $5.25 an hour.
- A Steelworker locked out of Commonwealth Gas for turning down a contract calling for more than 50 concessions dictated two weeks after $3 million was given to management personnel, made possible by a record $54 million in profits.

"Unfortunately in our nation in recent years, we have seen a split between the privileged and the rest of us," said the Rev. Edward Boyd of the Boston Labor Guild. He called for confronting the nation and its leadership "to understand what is at stake here — not only bread on the table, but a spiritual bread, that spirit of mutual concern and mutual sharing that is at the heart of our life."

Union Summer's first wave is hot attraction

Continued from Page 1
responsible for this," SCORE organizer Rachel Brickman told the Akron participants. "We have to announce that we exist to the powers that be."

This new type of organizing strategy — involving new and existing community organizations — was born out of the realization that unions must take a communitywide approach in organizing workers. In other words, there must be several spoons stirring up public debate to show a correlation between decent wages and deteriorating communities.

In Boston, Union Summer activists working with ACORN (A Community Organization On Reform Now) told residents how a living wage of $7.49 an hour would at least bring a family of four up to the poverty line.

"We are out there working to empower people," said Liz Campos, one of the Boston campaigners. "The empowerment allows people to get for themselves what they have a right to have," she said.

The activists got a first-hand look at the sneaky tactics that many private industries use to separate workers by race, gender and income in an effort to take their eyes off of the real issues that divide the haves from the have-nots — wages, health care and job safety.

"I saw how the media turned around the Royal White Laundry workers' story," said Caroline O'Shea, also working on the Boston campaign. "I know how hard they have to work and the conditions that they work in. They are working in bad conditions and I don't know how the media could turn that around."

The activists participated in several educational activities as well, with Akron workers hearing about the important role that women play in the work force from Karen Nussbaum, director of the Working Women's Department at the AFL-CIO.

Workers in Washington attended several sessions at AFL-CIO headquarters as well as a floor debate in the Senate.

In Hilton Head, S.C., the activists had some fun performing "guerilla theater." Four Union Summer participants entered the Hyatt — the largest hotel on the island — and toasted the facility's general manager, Sheldon Fox, for "his dedication to union-busting and illegal, unethical practices."

Denver activists produced a theater piece dressed as scab-lawyer-vultures, complete with beaks and feather boas, and picked apart the benefits package of union workers.

And in Los Angeles, activists added a new verse to "Solidarity Forever:"

"We work in Union Summer
Because we know the boss is mad;
They think they can work you
And that you won't take a stand;
But if we work together
We can win our demand
For the union makes us strong."



Union Summer material available

Materials commemorating labor's historic Union Summer push are available now from the AFL-CIO.

Free full-color posters, 25-cent buttons, a VHS video for $8, purple and white baseball caps for $9 and light grey adult T-shirts with the 4-color logo front and back in Large, X-Large and 2X-Large for $12 may be ordered from the AFL-CIO, PMO, Room 209, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Buyers should send their name, organization, local number, street address, city, state, ZIP code, phone and FAX numbers along with a check or money order made payable to the AFL-CIO. District of Columbia residents only need to add 5.75 percent sales tax.

COURTS

Antitrust resort denied

The U.S. Supreme Court refused to allow workers to use antitrust laws to sue multiemployer groups that impose contract conditions after an impasse.

In two rulings that pertained directly to professional sports, the court made it clear that the implications applied to all multiemployer bargaining. In all cases, federal labor laws should trump antitrust suits in collective bargaining, even after impasse.

In Brown vs. Pro Football Inc., the court said it is not an antitrust violation for multiemployer groups to impose contract terms after negotiations have reached impasse. The National Labor Relations Board, not the antitrust courts, has the main responsibility to police the collective bargaining process, Justice Stephen Breyer wrote in the June 20 opinion.

The ruling nullified a $30.3 million damage award to the Football Players, who sued the National Football League owners after the owners imposed salary caps in 1989 on rookies after negotiations reached an impasse.

In Williams vs. The National Basketball Association, the high court let stand a lower court ruling that the NBA can jointly impose work conditions on players when contract talks reach an impasse.

UNITE, IBT sue Kmart

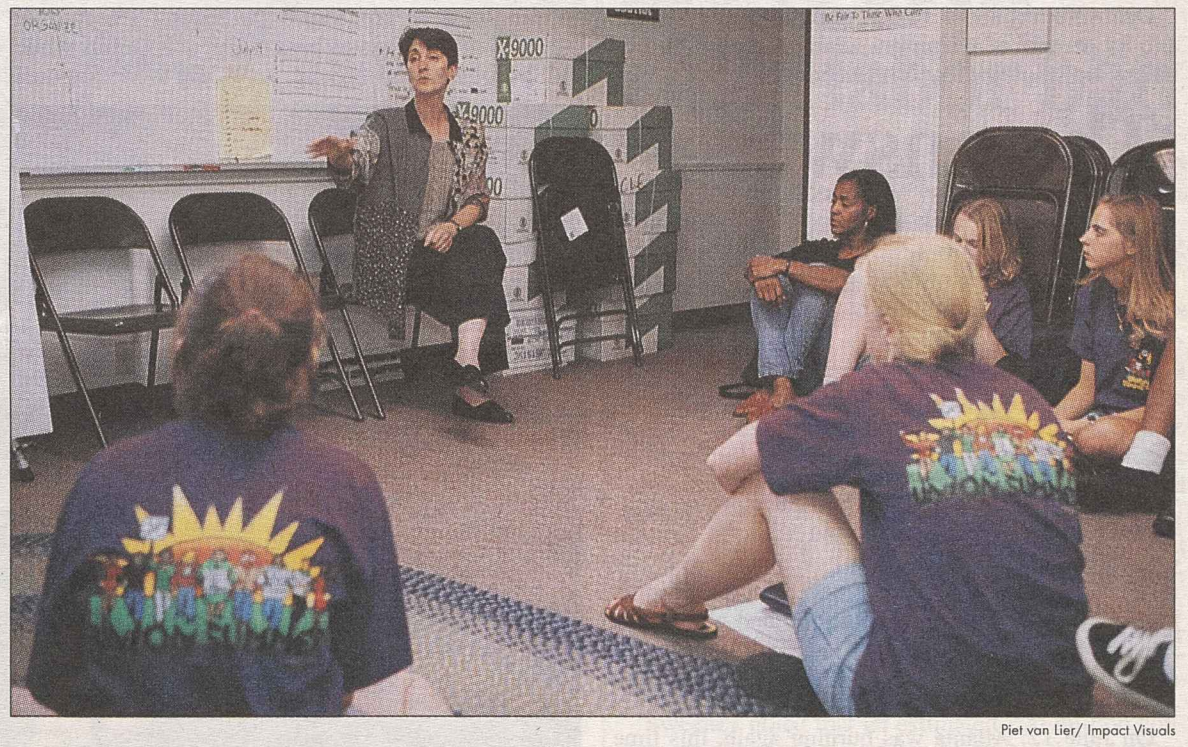
The Teamsters and UNITE filed suit against Kmart to force the company to correct about 40 million shareholder votes omitted or miscast during a proxy contest in May. If the court rules in their favor, a union-sponsored resolution calling for the annual election of directors would be approved.

"Shareholder resolutions are important referenda that corporate management must honor," said William Patterson, IBT's corporate affairs director. "Kmart cannot be allowed to flout its owners and the law," Patterson said.

"All shareholders should be concerned about corporations ignoring legal precedents regarding their votes," said Michael Zucker, UNITE's corporate and financial affairs director.

The suit, filed in Michigan state court, claims that at least 50 separate votes were corrected during the tabulation process after Kmart's annual meeting. But the company disallowed the corrected votes of the Ohio State Teachers Retirement System and Putnam Investment Management, two of the company's largest investors and backers of the union proposal.

UNITE is in negotiations on a first contract for some 550 workers at a Kmart distribution center in Greensboro, N.C. Last November, the union began a series of protests over discriminatory pay practices at the distribution center.



Piet van Lier/ Impact Visuals

Karen Nussbaum, director of the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department, meets with Union Summer activists.

Activists warm up to house calls

Continued from Page 1
body," she said. "Union Summer is an excellent opportunity for us to get to our membership and get them informed and involved."

Sahara Wilson, a soft-spoken 18-year-old Boston College student, got her first taste of the work when she traveled by subway, trolley, bus and then on foot with Campbell to call on residents in Boston's working-class Mattapan neighborhood.

Hugging her packets tightly to her chest, she mentally rehearsed her speech in those last moments before the door was opened to her — just to be told the family was busy and did not have time to talk.

"Even if they say no, don't take it personally," Campbell said. "And always try to give them a flier or literature."

Wilson's perseverance was rewarded at another house, whose occupant invited her into the kitchen to talk, professed interest in joining a union and suggested a couple of neighbors who might be interested in working with ACORN.

"I feel all right now that I did that call," she said. "I was just nervous about messing up. But that was easy."

By afternoon's end, Wilson had knocked on about a dozen doors, learned one of the residents' biggest concerns was the traffic that zooms through their neighborhood and had six leads for potential community and union activists.

"It was a good afternoon," she said.

In Akron, Sarah Sherburn-Zimmer and Marija Kowalski were feeling the anxious lump in their throats while waiting on a stranger's doorstep on Burton Street, rehearsing their lines.

The two heard a range of concerns, including a resident now undergoing chemotherapy who talked about the cost of health care, a wife of a union member who discussed the workers' prospects in bargaining, a single woman working three jobs just to keep her home and a great-grandmother currently raising two generations of children.

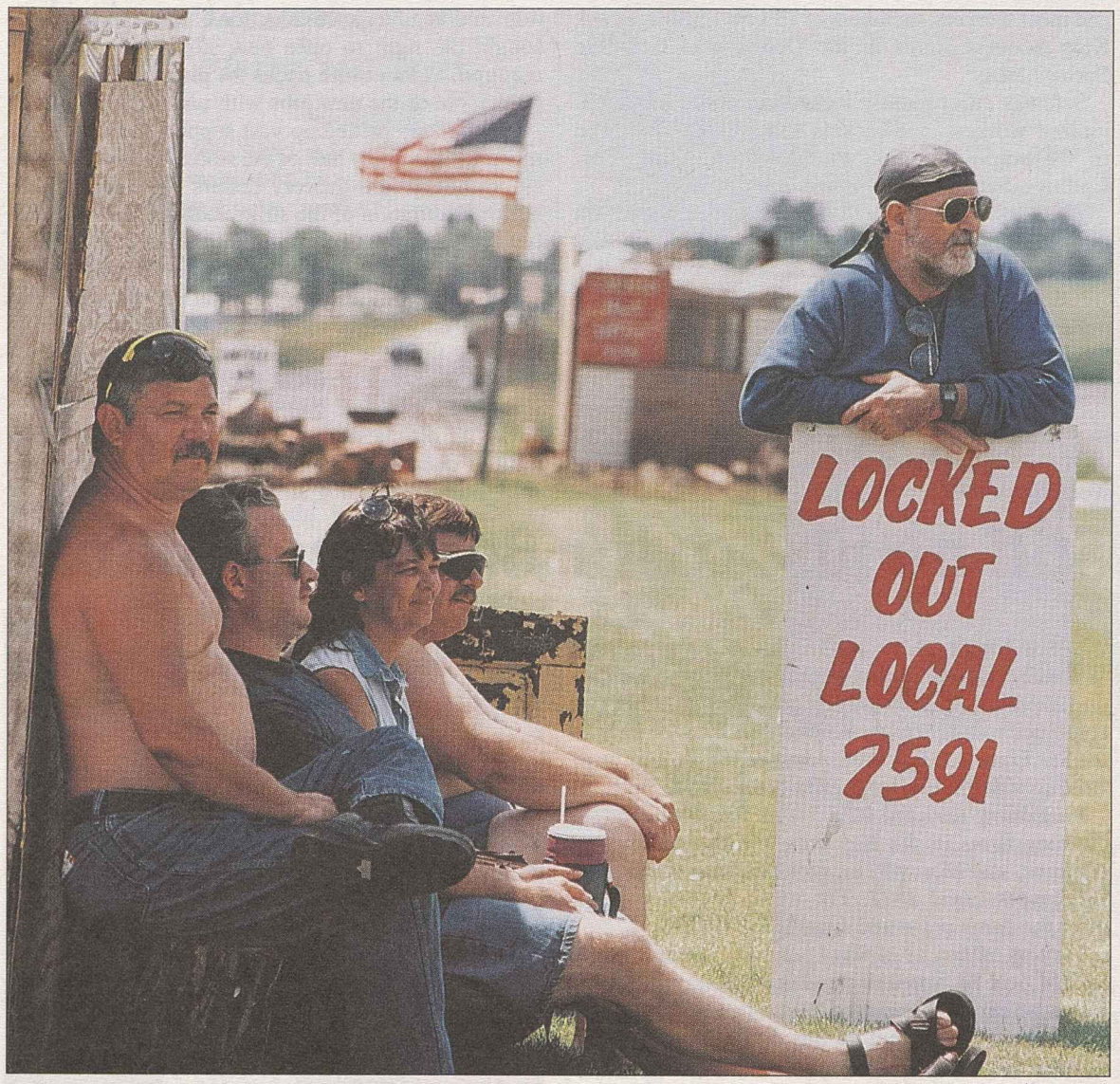
"This is very difficult, but beneficial work," said Sherburn-Zimmer. "It's very intense, but I'm looking for a widespread way to fight social injustice."

"We try to talk to someone in every household and then rate them from one to four with four being the highest interest," Kowalski said. "But we don't impose," she said, referring to one resident who told them he was not a joiner and had a good dog and gun to deal with crime in the neighborhood.

"The trick is to get them to talk to you in the first two minutes," Kowalski said. "If you can do that, you're in."

Wilson, Sherburn-Zimmer and Kowalski all have learned the message of Union Summer — justice by all and for all — and now are learning to "bring it home" on a house-by-house basis. And residents of the Mattapan neighborhood and Burton Street have learned they aren't toiling in anonymity — they've opened up the door to all sorts of possibilities.

— Muriel H. Cooper



Marc PoKempner/Impact Visuals

Locked out Paperworkers monitor the comings and goings of scabs at Trailmobile's Charleston, Ill., plant, where they set up picket shacks at the entrances. Some 1,200 workers were locked out by the company on Jan. 21. A tentative agreement was reached June 26 after the company had a sudden change of heart.

Trailmobile in tentative pact

International campaign, persistent strikers prevail

By James B. Parks

Five months after being locked out by Trailmobile, 1,200 Paperworkers were set to vote on a tentative contract reached June 26 following a labor battle that spanned the globe.

The company, whose parent Gemala Group is based in Indonesia, agreed to return to the bargaining table after massive demonstrations June 19 in front of Indonesian embassies in Washington and Canberra, Australia, denouncing the company's treatment of workers.

The company also was influenced by the steadfast determination of members of UPIU Local 7591, who rejected a concessionary contract June 11 by an 80 percent margin, and who have maintained a scab watch outside the plant in Charleston, Ill.

The tentative three-year agreement, arrived at after seven hours on nonstop talks, includes annual pay increases, which had been a major point of contention, and improvements in health insurance and the pension. The contract was presented to members June 28, and voting is scheduled to be conducted by secret ballot later this month.

"If it had not been for the hard work of the bargaining committee and the support of the membership, this goal would not have been reached," said UPIU Local 7591 President Gary Collins.

Collins was called into an unusual Sunday meeting June 23 with Trailmobile CEO Edward Wanandi after returning from the rally in Washington. The meeting was arranged by Rep. Glenn Poshard (D-Ill.) and Charleston Mayor Dan Cougil, and was facilitated by federal mediator Tom Henry.

At the Indonesian embassy in Washington, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, UPIU President Wayne Glenn and Collins joined 1,200 delegates to the Industrial Union Department's legislative conference to protest the company's conduct.

Collins, Glenn and IUD President Elmer Chatak delivered a letter to Indonesia's ambassador asking his government to take the union's concerns to the top management of the Gemala Group.

In Canberra, Australia, the Australian Council of Trade Unions marched in front of the Indonesian embassy and delivered a letter from ACTU Secretary Bill Kelty urging the government to press for an end to the conflict.

Trailmobile's offer that was rejected June 11 contained some concessions by the company, Collins said, but management continued its unfair treatment of the workers.

The workers were particularly upset, Collins said, over lack of a wage increase. The previous four-year contract contained a wage freeze, which the company wanted to extend for three years. Workers make an average of $10.50 an hour at the manufacturer of over-the-road transport trailers.

The proposal also would have required the union to drop all unfair labor practice charges it has filed with the National Labor Relations Board over the lockout and treatment during bargaining.

The company wanted Collins to formally apologize to Wanandi for the union's campaign to publicize his family's close links to the Indonesian military. The union will not apologize "simply because we have told the truth about his family's history of exploitation in Indonesia," Collins said.

Some 1,200 UPIU members were locked out of the plant Jan. 21, five days after the last contract expired. They were replaced by 500 scabs. The developments were seen as a continuing anti-union campaign by the Indonesian-based company.

In 1989, Gemala had bought up Trailmobile's Canadian operations and, over a four-year-period, closed all those facilities and put 570 unionized employees out on the street.

One month after it bought the U.S. operations in 1991, Trailmobile locked out 20 workers at its Winnipeg, Manitoba, plant after they refused to accept a 24 percent decrease in wages. The lockout lasted two years.

In September 1992, the company announced plans to build a $20 million facility in right-to-work Jonesboro, Ark. When the facility was completed in 1993, the company closed its last plant in Canada and moved the work to Arkansas. Ironically, the Jonesboro plant was successfully organized by the Electronic Workers in 1995.

McDonnell's callousness angers IAM

Scabs hired in St. Louis; company, strikers talking

By James B. Parks

Striking Machinists at the McDonnell Douglas plant in St. Louis denounced the company's plan to hire replacement workers and the "shocking" comments by its president that he hoped children of workers at competing companies "starved to death."

"Instead of trying to improve the situation, McDonnell Douglas has made a rash and provocative move that endangers the future of tens of thousands of men and women," said Gerry Oulsen, president of IAM District 837. "We sincerely hope the company reconsiders their position and opts for a reasonable and early settlement."

Negotiations resumed June 27 when both sides accepted an invitation from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to return to the bargaining table.

The company announced June 12 it would hire temporary replacement workers for the plant, which makes military aircraft, and temporarily transfer some production to other plants or to subcontractors.

"There is no call for this," Oulsen said. "We seek the same basic job security provisions that already cover workers at Boeing, General Electric, Pratt & Whitney. Certainly McDonnell Douglas faces a highly competitive global market. But that only underscores the need for workers to have a reasonable measure of security."

The folly of McDonnell Douglas's strategy was clear June 19 when a Navy F/A-18C Hornet fighter crashed outside a St. Louis suburb after having major repair work done by white-collar supervisors at the plant. The union expressed concern "over the wisdom of having high-performance aircraft manufactured, inspected and maintained by people untrained and unfamiliar with that complex work."

Some 6,700 employees walked out June 5 at the plant after rejecting the aerospace company's latest contract offer. The key issue in the talks is McDonnell's increasing use of outside contractors and the transfer of some work to nonunion plants in Mesa, Ariz., and Macon, Ga.

The company, which made $770 million in profits last year, has given workers one raise in the last four years and has proposed the same for the next four years.

"We seek to ease the health care costs facing future retirees. With one-quarter of a billion dollar surplus in the pension fund, McDonnell Douglas could ease that burden without spending a single dime," Oulsen added.

The union refused to accept an "informal settlement" of a National Labor Relations Board complaint against McDonnell Douglas over the suppression and shredding of records of an April 11 meeting between union negotiators and company President Herb Lanese.

Union records of the meeting show Lanese said the company closed an electronics factory in St. Charles, Mo., in 1990, putting 300 people out of work "out of spite . . . to prove to the union that we could do it" and that he hoped children of union members at Boeing and Lockheed Martin "starved to death."

"You in the IAM think of the people in Boeing in Seattle and the people at Lockheed Martin as your brothers and sisters," Lanese is quoted as saying in the union records. "You have to look at them like I do, as your mortal enemy. I wish they were dead. I wish their children would starve to death. I wish they would lose their houses. When you all get that mind set, then we'll be in synch."

"Lanese's remarks demonstrate a shocking and destructive mind set," Oulsen said. "We refused to accept the informal settlement because it required the company to post a notice in the shop, and our members aren't in the shop."

The Missouri AFL-CIO and the St. Louis AFL-CIO sponsored two rallies, with supporters from every major union. The union also is seeking donations to help striking families. Donations should be mailed to: IAM District 837 Defense Fund, 212 Utz Lane, Hazelwood, Mo. 63402.

Denver grocery workers end strike with contract

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Striking and locked-out Food and Commercial Workers in Denver have declared victory in their struggle against two chains, with a new three-year contract to show for the fight.

UFCW said the pact, accepted by Safeway and King Soopers retail and meat clerks in Denver by a 63 percent vote, included "major improvements on the key pocketbook issues for working families," including wage increases and boosts in health and pension benefits and job protection.

UFCW Local 7 President Gary R. Hakes said customer support for the strikers was one of the major keys to the settlement, "Local 7 members cannot thank the customers enough." He also praised union members who, "drew the line and held the line against the destruction of living standards for working families."

The dispute began May 14 when about 9,000 retail and meat workers, members of UFCW Local 7, struck King Soopers stores in the Denver and Colorado Springs areas.

Safeway subsequently locked out about 4,000 unionized workers, and pickets and lockouts followed in Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Longmont, Fort Collings, Salida, Alamosa and other towns.

The contract reflects a resurgence of union activism among workers in the face of a growing corporate trend toward a disposable, low-wage, no-benefit work force, the union said.

UFCW President Doug Dority said the union, which committed $100 million to the fight, would extend Local 7's picket lines to other areas of the country if the employers did not offer a fair settlement in Colorado.

The companies had demanded major changes that would cut union jobs, such as contracting out sanitation and maintenance functions. Management also sought the right to open new stores without being required, as they were under the prior contract, to fill 60 percent of the new jobs with union members.

The strikers picked up vast support from the community, with about half of the stores' regular customers spending their grocery dollars elsewhere for the six-week duration of the strike/lockout. Industry analysts estimate the two chains hold about 72 percent of the market share in the Rocky Mountain state.

Those analysts also estimate that Safeway and King Soopers may be facing a $120 million reduction in sales for the time period, or an after-tax loss of $4 million for Soopers parent Kroger Co. and $2.3 million for Safeway.

UFCW officials said Local 7 had spent between $5 million and $6 million in strike benefits, with the international spending another $3 million.

BARGAINING

UAW snubs USA TODAY

The UAW began its contract talks with the Big Three automakers with a show of solidarity for striking Detroit newspaper employees.

UAW President Stephen P. Yokich refused to begin the ceremonial opening sessions with Ford June 10, Chrysler June 11 and General Motors June 12 as long as reporters for the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press were present. He also asked that USA TODAY's Detroit bureau chief leave the Chrysler ceremony. All three automakers complied with Yokich's request.

The UAW, the AFL-CIO and many affiliated unions will not talk to reporters from the two newspapers. The AFL-CIO also has spearheaded a national boycott of USA TODAY, Gannett's flagship paper.

Once the talks begin in earnest, the key issues on the table will be outsourcing, mandatory overtime and maintaining wages and pension benefits. The UAW represents 400,000 workers at the Big Three under contracts that expire Sept. 14.

Job security is also a key issue for the Electronic Workers, which represents 25,000 workers at GM. The IUE opened talks with the giant automaker June 17.

IAM, Weyerhauser agree

The Machinists ratified a new four-year contract with Weyerhauser Co. that maintains health benefits, raises wages and increases pension benefits.

The pact, which covers 3,300 woodworkers in Oregon and Washington, raises wages 45 cents per hour in each of the first and third years, followed by hikes of 3 percent in each of the second and fourth years. The average wage is now $13.50 per hour, according to Rod Kelty, president of IAM Woodworkers District 1.

Under the agreement, the defined-benefit pension plan was changed to a uniform benefit for all retirees instead of the previous three-tier system.

Bricklayers end strike

About 5,000 Chicago-area Bricklayers ended an 11-day strike and returned to work June 12 after ratifying a new four-year contract.

The workers walked out May 31 after the previous contract with the Mason Contractors Association expired. "We are happy as we can be at this point," said Joe Birmingham, vice president of BAC Illinois District Council 1. "This strike was totally about wages and conditions."

The new agreement calls for wage increases of $1.23 an hour in the first year, followed by raises of $1.21 in each of the last three years. The average rate for a Chicago bricklayer currently is $24 per hour.

The contractors are permitted to create a "pre-apprentice" job classification to boost the number of journeymen and journeywomen bricklayers. The new contract also clarifies work hours, making 40 hours the standard work week.

Buffalo trades in pacts

New three-year agreements between six Buffalo, N.Y., unions and the Construction Industry Employers Association provide hourly wage and fringe benefit raises over term ranging from $2.41 to $3.01. Each union will decide how to allocate the increases for its members.

The agreements cover some 6,000 members of the Laborers, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Iron Workers, Operating Engineers and the Cement Masons.

Still no justice for Bay area janitors

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

While thousands of janitors and their supporters marched and rallied in cities across the country on Justice for Janitors Day, more than 4,500 janitors continued rolling strikes at more than a dozen sites in the San Francisco Bay area. Another 300 janitors were striking indefinitely until a settlement is reached.

Bargaining resumed June 7 with the eight contract cleaning firms in the Bay area, but the strikes will continue, said Marcy Rein, spokeswoman for Service Employees Local 1877. The union is reviewing an offer the firms presented June 26.

Janitors in the city of San Francisco, represented by SEIU Local 87, voted to stand in solidarity with their fellow union brothers and sisters. Those janitors, who clean about 90 percent of San Francisco buildings, will not cross Local 1877's picket lines if they go up in the city, said SEIU Local 87 President Richard Leung during a June 21 press conference outside American Building Maintenance Co. headquarters.

ABM, which employs Local 87's janitors, is one of the eight contractors involved in the negotiations.

SEIU's annual Justice for Janitors Day, June 15, recognized the need for janitors, many of whom are immigrants from Latin America, Asia and India, to get a fair deal from employers that have taken advantage of them for years. The campaign has helped unionize some 33,500 building service workers across the country over the past nine years.

Rallies were held in Denver, Los Angeles, Hartford, Conn., Seattle, San Diego and Pittsburgh. The janitors also called attention to "America's Top Trash" companies — nonunion cleaning companies that refuse to pay decent wages.

The 1996 nominees are Hewlett-Packard in Sacramento, Calif.; Contract Cleaning Inc. in Denver; Marine Midland Bank in Buffalo, N.Y.; DQE Inc. in Pittsburgh; the University of Southern California; Tri-C Community College in Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Lawrence Lui of San Francisco; City of Hartford, Conn.; P&R Enterprises Inc. in Washington; Creative Building Maintenance in Detroit; and Koll Real Estate Services in San Diego.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Union Summer activists in Washington joined thousands of janitors on Justice for Janitors Day, June 15.

The list also includes giant corporations that implicitly condone these actions by continuing to contract with "enemies of justice."

In Washington, more than 200 union janitors were joined by P&R's nonunion janitors, Union Summer activists and religious and community leaders in a rally and march through downtown.

The rally was an eye-opener for the young activists of Union Summer, who worked the crowd spreading enthusiasm for the janitors' cause.

"I love it. It's the most exciting summer I've ever had," said Sara Marcus, a second-year student at Yale University. "I got involved in the labor movement at Yale and ever since then I've been active."

Two SEIU-Kaiser contracts approved

Two locals have reached agreement with Kaiser Permanente on new contracts, while other union members continue to work without one.

Some 72 percent of 14,000 members of Service Employees Local 250 voted to accept a three-year pact with the California HMO, in results announced June 7. The contract, retroactive to Oct. 29, 1995, includes additional job security protection and enhanced seniority rights, a three-year wage-scale freeze, a new $3 co-pay charge for prescription medicine and health and bereavement coverage for domestic partners.

"Compared with the gains of the last six years, this is not a good or a fair contract," said Sal Rosselli, president of the Northern California local. "Workers, their bargaining committee and union leadership supported this contract because they believe the altenative, an all-out war with Kaiser, would not change Kaiser's position at this time."

Local 250 now will concentrate on educating consumers and mobilizing members to pass the HMO Patients' Rights Initiative to protect patients and further regulate HMOs, Rosselli said.

A much narrower margin carried the proposal made to some 10,000 members of SEIU Local 399 in Southern California, who accepted Kaiser's "last and final" offer by a 56 percent to 44 percent vote.

That 5.5-year agreement runs through Sept. 30, 2001, and includes a wage freeze until October 1997, a $1 million training fund for union members and a commitment by Kaiser to develop in the next 90 days a computerized job-matching system. Laid-off workers will receive 160 hours of paid training under the contract, and the company agreed not to subcontract work if it would lead to layoffs of Local 399 members.

In addition, the contract creates a joint committee on compensation and job security to be staffed by health care economists and with a facilitator selected by labor and management.

Local 399 members also will have a new "earned time" leave bank and will have new fees to pay for medical office visits, prescription drugs and mental health visits.

Other locals representing Kaiser workers on the West Coast with open contracts include Office and Professional Workers Local 29, SEIU Local 535, AFT Local 5017 and Professional and Technical Engineers/Engineers and Scientists of California.

The AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department has been working with unions representing Kaiser workers for more than a year on strategy and coordination.

AFSCME gears for elections

Clinton 'pleads guilty' to supporting unions

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Delegates to the 32nd AFSCME convention marched the streets of Chicago, calling for a fair contract for Cook County workers, and welcomed President Clinton as one of their own.

Clinton, who once was a dues-paying AFSCME member, pleaded "guilty" to charges that he supports unions, deriding extremist Republicans in Congress for their criticism.

"They truly believe the government is the problem, and what people want to be told is that they're on their own," he said.

Union political action must be magnified this year by full participation of AFSCME's 1 million members, union President Gerald W. McEntee told the delegates.

"What's at stake is whether America will be a country where every family can get ahead and no worker is ever left behind, or whether it will be a nation where only a few make it to the top while the rest of us are left to fight it out on the bottom."

AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy, who also is president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, said the union would continue to fight "for an America that works for everyone, not just a few."

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney described how the federation is building a legislative and political structure that will last beyond this political year, with at least 100 union activists in every congressional district.

"America's unions are back," he declared, "and now we're going to take back the House, we're going to take back the Senate, and yes, we're going to take back our country."

A basic part of labor's efforts, said AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, a former AFSCME vice president, will be education and information on the issues that affect working families. "Then, we'll judge candidates on whether they support the issues that we're fighting for."

Chanting "No wage freeze, no health cuts, no way!" more than 2,000 of the convention delegates and guests surrounded the Cook County Building and Chicago City Hall demanding fair treatment for county employees who have been without a contract for seven months.



AFSCME photo

AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee joins convention delegates in applauding President Clinton.

County negotiators have proposed a three-year wage freeze. At the same time, they are seeking to significantly increase employee health insurance costs through higher premiums, co-payments and prescription fees. The previous contract expired last Nov. 30.

"We want (County Board President) John Stroger to know that if he thought he was just picking a fight with AFSCME in Cook County, he's got another think coming," McEntee told the cheering crowd. "Because when you pick a fight with AFSCME in Cook County, you're going up against the entire union."

Other convention speakers included Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.); House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.); Myrlie Evers-Williams, chair of the NAACP; Harold Ford Jr., candidate for the 9th congressional district in Tennessee; and Aaron Feuerstein, a Massachusetts mill owner who continued to pay his workers after his business burned to the ground last December.

UNION NEWS

New state fed leaders

The Arkansas and South Dakota state federations elected new presidents.

J. Bill Becker, president of the Arkansas AFL-CIO for more than 30 years, was ousted June 13 in a special mail election ordered by the AFL-CIO.

The new president, Alan Hughes, formerly executive vice president and a member of the Paperworkers, was sworn in immediately after the ballots were counted. Becker is contesting the election in state court.

Meanwhile, the South Dakota AFL-CIO elected Gil Koetzle president. Koetzle, who also is a state representative, is a member of Fire Fighters Local 814.

W.Va. park on boycott list

Oglebay Park in Wheeling, W.Va., has been added to the AFL-CIO boycott list at the request of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees.

More than 80 percent of the workers have voted for representation by HERE, but the Wheeling Park Commission has refused to recognize the union. The commission's response has been to harass and intimidate union supporters and organizers through firings and a private security force.

The NLRB has ruled it does not have jurisdiction over the park because the Wheeling Park commissioners are public officials and the commission is a political subdivision of the City of Wheeling.

Asbestos pact reached

Two construction unions and a contractors group have approved a four-year agreement governing all asbestos and lead abatement work performed in New York City and on Long Island.

The Mason Tenders' District Council of New York and Long Island, Local 12A Abatement of the Asbestos Workers and the Environmental Contractors Association Inc. said in a statement the pact would end years of competition and divisive jurisdictional disputes and improve the health and safety of the workers and the people of New York.

The agreement will raise the wages of asbestos abatement workers to $18 per hour and entitle employees to health insurance, retirement and training benefits. The total initial wage and benefit package of $22 per hour will rise to $24 per hour effective Dec. 1, 1997, and $26 per hour effective June 1, 1999.

CWA commits 10% of budget to organizing

Detroit

Delegates to the Communications Workers' 58th convention pledged 10 percent of the union's budget for organizing activities, making that commitment a part of the CWA constitution.

The constitutional amendment will boost the union's spending on organizing from the current 7 percent of budget, or about $4 million. Local unions also will be encouraged to increase their spending on organizing.

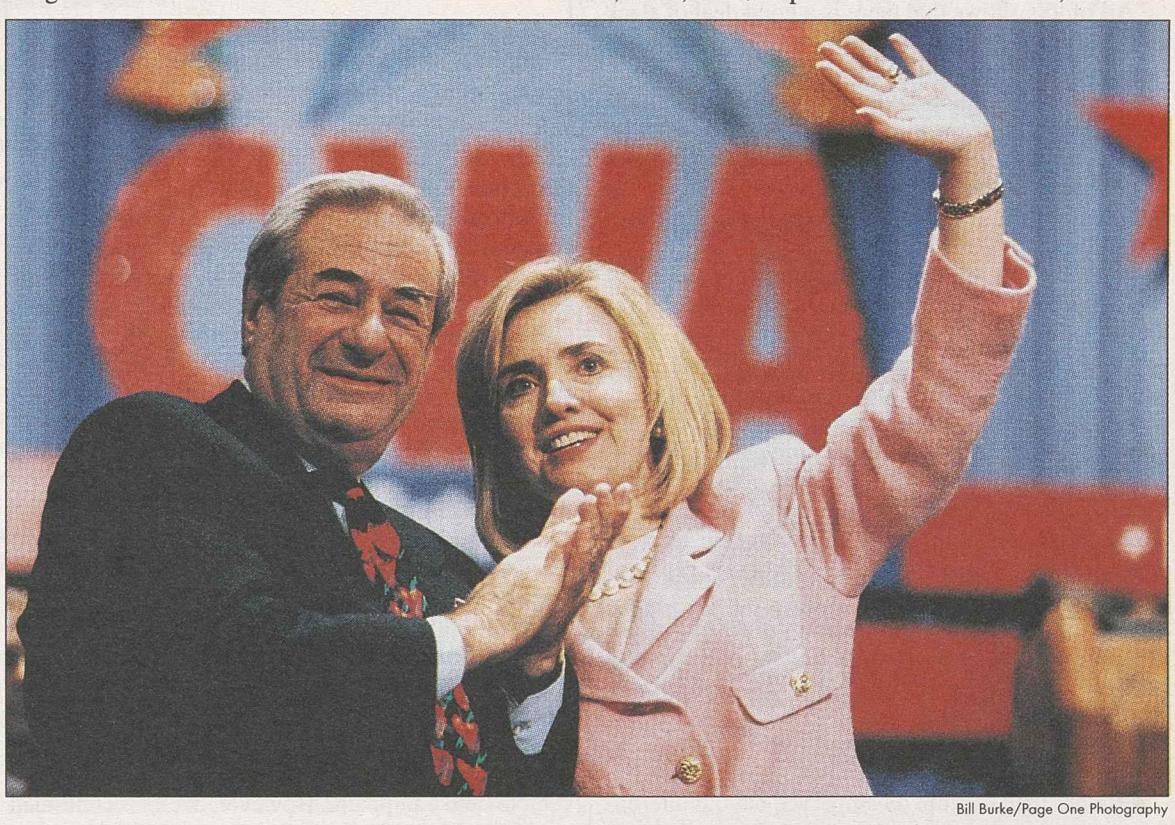
Re-elected to three-year terms were President Morton Bahr, Secretary-Treasurer Barbara J. Easterling, Executive Vice President M.E. Nichols and several vice presidents. Larry Mancino, James E. Smith Jr., Ben G. Turn Jr. and Tony Bixler also were elected as vice presidents.

The spotlight shone on organizing and political activities throughout the three-day meeting, attended by more than 3,000 delegates.

"Everything we have accomplished, all that we are and all that we hope to achieve in the future, will be rendered meaningless unless we win at the ballot box in November," Bahr told the delegates. "Between now and November, we must engage in the most vigorous, energetic and effective political action program that CWA has ever waged.

"At the Olympics, you win a silver medal for coming in second," he said. "In politics, second place gets you Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich."

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney updated the delegates on the "America Needs A Raise" campaign, Union Summer's youth activism and labor's political push for Union Fall, and urged CWA members to "stand with me and Richard Trumka and Linda Chavez-Thompson and Morty Bahr and Barbara Easterling as we take back this country."



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

CWA President Morton Bahr welcomes First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to the union's convention.

The convention endorsed the Clinton-Gore presidential ticket and the AFL-CIO's legislative and political programs, pledging record participation this election year.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton told delegates that "this president believes in you and your future. He believes in your spirit and your energy and your commitment to working men and women."

With the telecommunications industry awash with changes brought about by mergers, downsizing, joint ventures and breakups, delegates repeatedly came back to the issue of jobs. While the jury is still out on recent telecommunications legislation, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Reed Hundt insisted the new law has spawned massive investment by business that is good for the country because it creates jobs.

Philip Bowyer, general secretary of Postal Telegraph and Telephone International, Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich.), Michigan AFL-CIO President Frank Garrison and former New Jersey Gov. Jim Florio (D) also addressed the convention.

ECONOMY

Wage gap widens as worker pay dips again

By David Kameras

Real earnings took another dip in May, by 0.1 percent, as America's need for a raise continued to be painfully evident.

The drop in purchasing power took place even as inflation remained modest, with consumer prices rising 0.3 percent, driven largely by a 2.3 percent increase in the price of gasoline.

Nonetheless, the inflation-obsessed Federal Reserve continued to keep a tight grip on the money supply, thereby depressing investment and helping to nudge the unemployment rate up 0.2 percent for the month. In fact, before the new consumer price figures came out, analysts were predicting that the central bank might actually raise rates, putting further brakes on the anemic economic recovery.

A June 19 Census Bureau report shows the gap between the richest and poorest Americans is at its widest since World War II. From 1968 to 1994, the report says, the share of the nation's aggregate income that went to the top 20 percent of households increased from 40.5 percent to 46.9 percent, while the share of income earned by the rest of the nation's households declined or stagnated.

In a survey of the metropolitan area surrounding the Windy City, the Chicago Tribune found that the exercise of stock options helped drive the obscene take for Gary Tooker of Motorola Inc. ($9.1 million), Floyd English of Andrew Corp. ($17.3 million) and Casey Cowell of U.S. Robotics Corp. ($18.6 million).

At the same time, working families pay the price for the bumper cash crop in the executive suites.

- After slicing 25 percent of its work force in four years, 874 jobs in 1995 alone, Houston Lighting & Power gave CEO Don Jordan $2.19 million, not counting stock options on more than 36 thousand shares.
- The parent company of Commonwealth Edison gave its CEO a 30 percent raise after reducing its work force by 17 percent, or some 3,400 jobs, four years ago.
- The merger of Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. with Potomac Electric Power Co., while potentially providing a windfall to executives and shareholders, is expected to result in the elimination of more than 1,200 jobs.

"Of those savings they claim, $1 billion will be in labor," said Jim Hunter, president of Electrical Workers Local 1900. "These companies need to look at people and look at the future, rather than just slashing jobs for short-term profits."

Not surprisingly, American workers have concluded they are getting the short end of the stick. In a recent poll conducted for the AFL-CIO by Peter D. Hart Associates and the Mellman Group, 93 percent say top corporate managers are doing very or fairly well, 81 percent put large corporations in that same category and 78 percent say stockholders and investors are among the economy's winners.

However, only 41 percent think the middle class is doing very well, with 42 percent saying it is just getting by, and 13 percent think it's not doing well at all. As for working families, the figures are 20 percent, 61 percent and 18 percent, respectively.

A majority rejects the contention that businesses cut jobs to better compete in a global economy, an excuse often voiced by corporate apologists. A whopping 83 percent agree that "average working families have less economic security today, because corporations have become too greedy and care more about profits than about being fair and loyal to their employees." Some 59 percent of those surveyed strongly agree with that statement.

"When you laid off people in the olden times . . . it was because of a decrease in productivity," said one respondent in Birmingham, Ala. "Now with the downsizing, they are laying off people and raising executive pay."

The result is more widespread poverty, even among those who have jobs, and the impact is hardest on our littlest citizens, those who have no voice in the political process.

A report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that, in 1994, two out of three poor children in this country — some 5.6 million — had parents who worked, but at wages too low to lift them out of poverty. That represents a 30 percent increase from 1989.

Moreover, for those families whose work kept them off welfare, their children faced additional disadvantages. For example, if a parent's job didn't include health benefits, as is typical of low-wage employment, they would still be ineligible for Medicaid.

"The impulse to reform welfare by enhancing self-sufficiency through work and earnings is a sound one," said foundation Executive Director Douglas W. Nelson. "But at the same time, we have to make certain that working will actually enable families to meet the minimum needs of their children."

Good jobs are still hard to find

Unemployment in May increased 0.2 percent to 5.6 percent as the nation's jobless rate continued to stagnate in the unacceptably high range it has maintained since late 1994.

In addition to the 7.4 million officially unemployed, 4.3 million were working part time involuntarily and 1.5 million were available for work but had stopped looking for jobs, for a total of 13.2 million affected by total or partial unemployment, or 9.5 percent.

"All of this shows that there is a good deal of slack in the labor markets and plenty of room to put people to work," said AFL-CIO economist Frank Parente.

Job insecurity has become a way of life for most American workers, as management turns its back on the social contract that used to dictate that employees would share in the prosperity they helped to create. In recent weeks, the reports of large job cuts have continued unabated.

- Navistar International Corp. has announced it will vaporize 3,000 jobs, 60 percent of its work force, at its truck and bus factory in Springville, Ohio, amid speculation by UAW Local 402 officials that management likely will be setting up shop in Mexico.
- After reporting record profits, ConAgra Inc. announced it will close its meat-packing plant in Kansas City, affecting 260 workers, months after closing a plant in Des Moines, Iowa, that cost 1,300 jobs. In all, the huge food conglomerate is planning to close or restructure 29 plants, with 6,500 workers getting a pink slip.
- At SEPTA, the transit agency that serves the Philadelphia area, 250 workers will be laid off after an estimated 475 of their colleagues accept early retirement packages.
- Phelps Tool and Die Co. in Kansas City will lay off 150 of its 580 employees.
- Rather than explore an employee buyout alternative pursued by Teamsters Local 815, Syratech Corp. is moving ahead with plans to sell the Farberware brand name to another company, stripping the market value of the pots and pans made by 700 workers in the South Bronx who are likely to end up on the street as a result.
- Donnelly Corp. is closing a plant that makes car windows and sun roofs, affecting 95 Tennessee workers.

Many employers are turning to "employee-leasing" firms to provide them with short-term labor, while the workers get lower pay and little or no benefits. On an average work day last year, 2,162,000 workers got their paychecks through temp agencies, a doubling from five years earlier, according to the National Association of Temporary and Staffing Services.

DATA

Unemployment Rate	
May	5.6 percent
May (Total Affected)	9.5 percent
April	5.4 percent
Real Weekly Earnings	
May	-0.1 percent
May '95-May '96	+0.7 percent

Despite the increase in joblessness in May, the economy actually gained 348,000 nonfarm jobs, a fact cited by Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich as "further evidence that the president's economic program is a stunning success." The job growth puts Clinton's tally of total jobs created at 9.7 million in 3.5 years, surpassing his earlier pledge of 8 million in four years.

Nonetheless, "given this robust economy, the absence of accelerating inflation and the sharp increase in productivity earlier this year, there is room for further wage growth," he said. "Working Americans should be getting a larger slice of this prosperity. At the very least, we ought to be raising the minimum wage so that the nation's lowest-paid workers can get ahead."

The bulk of the jobs created in May were in services, which saw a 313,000 increase — 48,000 in business services alone, Parente said. Manufacturing employment held steady, after dropping 282,000 jobs since March 1995, with a 10,000-job increase in motor vehicles and equipment. However, declines continued in other industries, including apparel, printing and publishing and food processing.

The jobless rate rose for adult women (4.7 percent to 5 percent), white workers (4.7 percent to 4.9 percent) and adult white women (4.1 percent to 4.4 percent). It remained steady for adult men (4.8 percent), adult white men (4.2 percent), white teenagers (12.9 percent) and adult African-American men (9.6 percent) and declined for teenagers (16.7 percent to 16.4 percent), African-American workers (10.5 percent to 10.2 percent), adult African-American women (8.4 percent to 8.3 percent), African-American teenagers (31.3 percent to 30.2 percent) and Hispanic workers (9.7 percent to 9.2 percent).

— David Kameras

New credit card offers better deal

Holders of the Union Privilege MasterCard will notice a small change in the administration of the card — but the change is substantial for the labor movement, reaping big rewards for all workers.

Household International has acquired the program from the Bank of New York, and will take over billing and customer service responsibilities Aug. 16. Other changes are expected to be in place by February 1997.

What will not change, officials of the company and Union Privilege stressed, is the terms of the card and its interest rate, currently the prime rate plus 5 percent, or 13.25 percent.

"The new credit card arrangement is an even better deal for our members," said Union Privilege Chairman of the Board John J. Sweeney. "It retains the card's low rate, so it will continue to be the best and most affordable card for working Americans.

"And, the renegotiatied royalties to the AFL-CIO and its affiliates help all working families by providing funds for new organizing to build a stronger labor movement," he noted.

The deal is expected to generate some $300 million in royalties over the first five years on the usage of the card, currently held by 2.2 million union members and their families.

One key item agreed to by Household was a union sensitivity statement that supports the rights of workers to organize. The statement includes a pledge by the credit card division to build and maintain its facilities with competitive union contractors and to develop a $35 million strike loan fund.

The Household-Union Privilege deal also includes the following:

- An offer to cardholders to transfer their balances from other, higher-rate cards to their Union MasterCard and pay it off at the prime rate, now 8.25 percent, for the life of that transferred balance.
- New types of credit cards, such as a card with a grace period and a card for members with past credit problems or a limited credit history.
- Skip payment and strike benefits will continue to be available, with the strike skip-payment benefit extended.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Letter Carriers President Vincent R. Sombrotto rallies his troops in downtown Washington during NALC's national day of protest June 19. Locals from around the country engaged in informational picketing to focus attention on management's efforts to undermine the service component of the U.S. Postal Service by downsizing, privatizing and outsourcing. The Postal Workers will hold a similar day of picketing July 1.

AFL-CIO bids farewell to 67 longtime staff

Many longtime toilers in the vineyards of labor will reap their well-earned rewards, as the AFL-CIO says goodbye to 67 dedicated employees.

Thirty-nine headquarters staff members, 26 regional staff members and two workers from the George Meany Center for Labor Studies have accepted a retirement package from the federation.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney saluted the retiring employees "for the many years of dedication and loyalty to this federation and to the working families we all serve."

Many of the workers are well-known throughout the labor movement. **Edwin Schmidt**, who leads the group with 45 years of service, truly has been "labor's postmaster general," as head of Reproduction and Mailings and adviser to numerous affiliates and support groups on postal matters.

With the constant drumbeat of AFL-CIO conventions and other conferences, **Nancy Tutt**, director of Facilities Management, has worked miracles to complete thousands of requests for travel arrangements, hotel reservations, meeting scheduling and troubleshooting — working with only a staff of four. She will stay on through the end of the year, as will **Bren Leiss**, who heads up Personnel.

The wealth of experience the AFL-CIO is losing also includes the following managers of departments: **William (Bucky) Collins** (Accounting), **Joe Dustin** (Building Maintenance), **Laurence Gold** (Legal), **Rudy Oswald** (Economic Research), **Mary Pringle** (Purchasing) and **Dorothy Shields** (Education).

Others whose work was widely known include **Jane O'Grady**, retiring as a legislative representative who worked on civil rights, immigration and other social legislation on Capitol Hill. Likewise, **Cynthia McCaughan** helped lead labor's efforts on women's issues for 20 years. Many affiliates also gained economic insight through the expertise of **Anne Draper**, **Markley Roberts** and **John Zalusky**.

Several longtime regional directors also are retiring, including **Ray Francis** in the Midwest, who worked for the federation for 30 years. In New England, **Frank Myers,** with 29 years' service, also is calling it a career. **James Freeman** and **Louis (L.D.) Porter** directed two southern regions and were with the federation for more than 28 years. **Edward Collins,** a former director in the West, is retiring after 17 years.

Other headquarters staff retiring, by department, are: Accounting — **Patsy Howell** and **Tagie Kooser**; Building Maintenance — **Joseph Burrell**, **Helen Dabney**, **Thomas Davis**, **Elden Ferguson**, **Walter Harlow**, **Joseph Hill**, **Woodrow Johnson**, **Victor Tabbs** and **Katherine Whitten**; Civil Rights — **Patricia Osborne** and **Jean Reagh**; Computer Services — **James Bailey**, **Janet Bonillo** and **Diana Dow**.

Others include: Education — **Mitchell Dubich**; Employee Benefits — **Martha Lynch**; Facilities Management — **Georgia McCeney**; Field Services — **Maria (Bunny) Boyle**; International Affairs — **Janet Coco**; President's Office — **Patricia Connolly** and **Alfreda McAdams**; Reproduction — **Robert Rounds**.

Retiring regional staff are **Severiano Merino** from COPE Region 4, along with the following field staff by region: Region 1 — **Phil Priola**; Region 2 — **Margie Clinton**, **Charles Dial**, **Harry Helser**, **Andrew Johnson** and **Paul Nash**; Region 3 — **Beulah Carter**, **Arthur (Bobby) Fouche**, **Donald Jones** and **Rosa Rock**; Region 4 — **Betty Baugh**, **Homer Green** and **Dan Orey Jr.**; Region 5 — **Hollis Hales** and **Earle Wilbur**.

Also: Region 6 — **Ruben Diaz** and **Donald Glenn**; Region 7 — **Leonard Lewis**; Region 10 — **Charles Heady**; Region 11 — **Grace Carroll** and **Edward Kisner**.

Gene Morrill and **Lillian Roehl** retired from the Meany Center.

Several of the 67 left the AFL-CIO in the first half of the year, with the majority receiving pensions beginning July 1. Besides Tutt and Leiss, Davis and Howell also will stay on until the end of the year, while several other employees' retirement dates are yet to be determined.

NEWSMAKERS

AFL-CIO President **John J. Sweeney** was elected chairman of the Board of Trustees of the federation's Human Resources Development Institute. **Richard L. Trumka,** the federation's secretary-treasurer, will fulfill the same duties on the HRDI board. He replaces **William Collins,** who recently retired as the AFL-CIO's comptroller. Also newly elected to the institute's board were AFL-CIO Executive Vice President **Linda Chavez Thompson** and Service Employees Secretary-Treasurer **Betty Bednarczyk.**

Charles E. Mercer moves from secretary-treasurer to president of the Union Label and Service Trades Department on July 1, with **Dennis L. Kivikko** replacing him. Kivikko has managed the Union Industries Show for the past six years.

Audrey Jeanne Graham, 49, has been named a vice president of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers, replacing **Gary Mounkes,** who retired June 1. Graham has been a member of BC&T Local 218 in Kansas City, Mo., since 1982, and before that was a member of the Machinists for 10 years.

Robert Molofsky has been appointed general counsel for the Transit Workers Union, replacing **Earl Putnam,** who retired after 33 years. Molofsky has served as the union's legislative and political director for the past 15 years.

Carol T. Contes, a negotiator and attorney in the entertainment industry, has joined the Television and Radio Artists as assistant national executive director/entertainment programming based in AFTRA's Los Angeles office. Most recently, Contes was vice president of business affairs for Electronic Arts Productions Inc.

AWARDS

The National Anti-Extremist Coalition has awarded Laborers organizer **Randy Siemers** its Courage Award for his major role in responding to a series of hate crimes aimed at Native American, Jewish and African-American citizens of Billings, Mont.

In honor of her contributions to the labor movement, a scholarship program has been established in the name of **Dorothy Shields** for labor union women to attend programs at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies. Shields retired as director of the AFL-CIO's Education Department in June. She joined the department in 1972 and became its director in 1980, the first woman to head an AFL-CIO staff department. Scholarship contributions are tax deductible and should to be made payable to the Dorothy J. Shields Scholarship Fund, c/o George Meany Center for Labor Studies, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 20903.

DEATHS

Frank T. Hoese, former president of the Grain Millers, died in Minneapolis, Minn., after a long illness. He was 80.

Hoese began his career in 1948 at AFGM Local 27 in Chicago, was made an international representative in 1959 and elected executive vice president of the union in 1975. Hoese served his last four years, from 1979 to 1983, as AFGM president. He is survived by his wife and three children.

Herman Starobin, a former research director of the Ladies' Garment Workers, has died from heart disease at age 75.

Starobin joined the ILGWU, which has since merged with the Clothing and Textile Workers to form UNITE, in 1984 after spending a career as a corporate economist and manufacturing executive. He contended that many of the free trade policies adopted by the nation had caused the loss of jobs in the garment industry, writing in 1985 that "we have a Third World in this country. We are sacrificing that Third World for some esoteric idealogy of free trade that bears no relationship to reality."

He is survived by his wife and daughter.

William A. (Bill) Frank, former assistant to the secretary-treasurer of the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, died after a long illness. He was 68.

Prior to his appointment to the NABET international position, Frank was a member of NABET Local 25 in Buffalo for nearly 20 years and an officer for 16 years. NABET has since merged with the Communications Workers.

He is survived by his wife, three daughters, two sons and two grandchildren.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper

RESOURCES

CONFERENCE

Workers in Transition, sponsored by the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute, will be held Dec. 7-10 at the Fairmont Hotel and Conference Center in San Francisco. Contact Jim Templeton at 202/638-3912.

PUBLICATION

The 1996 AFL-CIO Guide to Union-Sponsored Scholarships, Awards and Student Financial Aid lists more than $4 million in scholarships available from international unions, local unions and AFL-CIO state and local central bodies. Contact the AFL-CIO Support Services Division, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

After year, Detroit spirit strong

By James B. Parks

One year after walking off some of the best jobs in town and suffering economic and emotional traumas because of it, striking Detroit newspaper workers are more determined than ever to stay the course and win a fair contract.

"We took a stand July 13 for equality and justice," said Ruby Karim, a Teamster and mother of three. "Downsizing has taken a toll on the labor movement and you can't take care of your families. We have to take a stand.

"I have children entering the labor force and they can't make it without union wages," said Karim, who has worked 12 years as a mailer. "I gave this company 100 percent. I earned my money. I never thought the company would stoop so low to treat us so bad."



Ruby Karim

Some 2,000 employees of the News and Free Press, owned by Gannett and Knight-Ridder, respectively, have been on strike since July 13, 1995, after negotiations failed to produce a new agreement. Management and imported scabs from other papers are producing the newspapers. Hired union-busting security goons from Vance and Huffmaster are delivering the papers. Striking unions include IBT, Communications Workers, Graphic Communications and The Newspaper Guild.

Support for the strike has grown. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton met privately with a dozen strikers June 10. The next day, some 3,000 delegates to the Communications Workers convention, meeting in Detroit, marched on the two newspapers to show solidarity with the strikers. The Newspaper Guild is affiliated with CWA.

Also, in what one supporter called a "miracle," some 850 religious leaders in the Detroit area signed an appeal to the newspapers to settle the strike. "We have witnessed a Pentecost experience: People of different faiths heard each other in their own language," said Rev. Edwin Rowe, pastor of Central United Methodist Church.

It is that kind of support that encourages strikers like Tom Waldron. "We're going to win this strike because we are together," said the striking GCIU member.

It has not been easy for the strikers. Waldron, 60, worked at the newspapers for 43 years. Now he has to pay $611 a month to the Detroit Newspapers to keep his health insurance, a necessity for his wife, who is crippled by arthritis. He only receives $150 a week in strike benefits and has to supplement that with part-time work at some union printing plants. He has spent the $20,000 he had invested in mutual funds and much of the money he had saved to send his 19-year-old son to college.

Crawford Webb, 51, an IBT member with 25 years of experience, tells of friends who have been devastated by the stress from the strike. One friend's medical coverage was dropped after he had heart surgery that cost about $20,000. Another friend who had a kidney transplant must pay a $200-a-month electric bill just for his dialysis machine.

"It's getting scary," said Jack Howe, president of the GCIU local. "Some of the members are able to find part-time work, but most are not working or getting unemployment. Some of the wives work. The Building and Construction Trades are hiring some of the striking workers for day work.

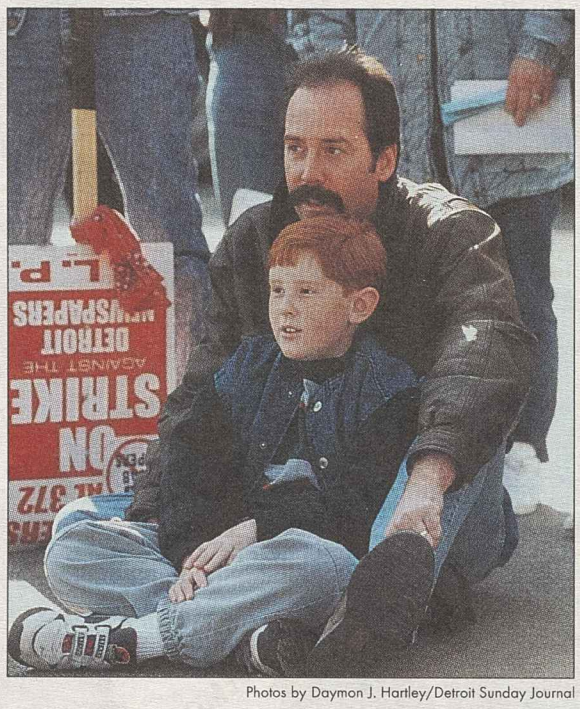
"Some of the workers are close to repossession, but not one time has anyone doubted the reason for the strike," he said.

For Jocelyn Faniel-Heard, the reasons for the strike begin with her family. She remembers fondly when her father was finally able to join the Electrical Workers in the late 1950s and brought home his first union check. "It was more money in one check than he had made in one month before," she said. "Now, I'm trying to make it better for my nephew and niece (ages 13 and 2, respectively) to be union members if they choose to."

Despite the personal cost, Jim St. Louis, 37, would go out again today. "I know they still want to eliminate family wage jobs, health care and pensions and bring in people at $8 an hour," said the 17-year mailer. He particularly resents management's "lies" about the striking workers' "excessive overtime and featherbedding." Workers were on the job on holidays and weekends because they were scheduled that way.

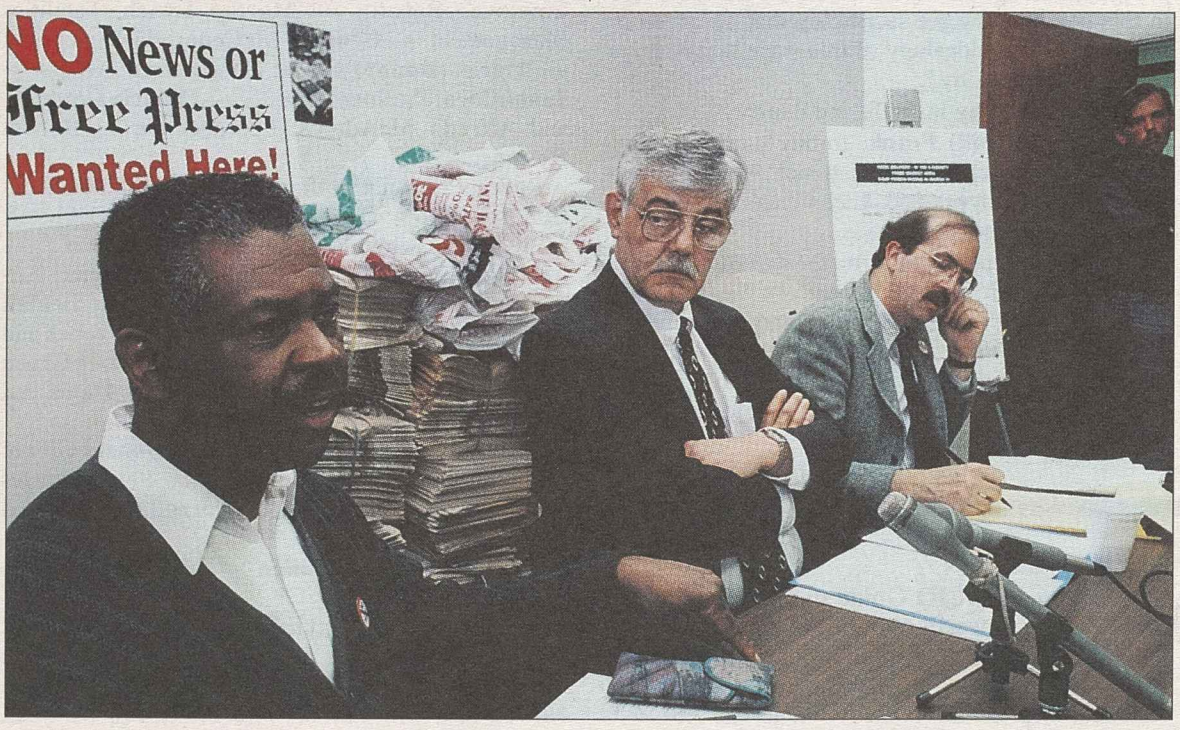
For John Lippert, a TNG member and labor reporter for the Free Press for eight years, the strike is most tragic for what it has done to the job he loves. "I'm very sad about the whole thing. It's very destructive to people, this nagging uncertainty. Every day you get up and say 'now what?' But I know I made the right choice morally.

"A lot of people are just scared," Lippert said. "They know they can't last forever, but they can't see anything better."



Photos by Daymon J. Hartley/Detroit Sunday Journal

Jim St. Louis, a striking mailer, resents management's lies about excessive overtime. Now his son is putting in overtime with him on the picket line.

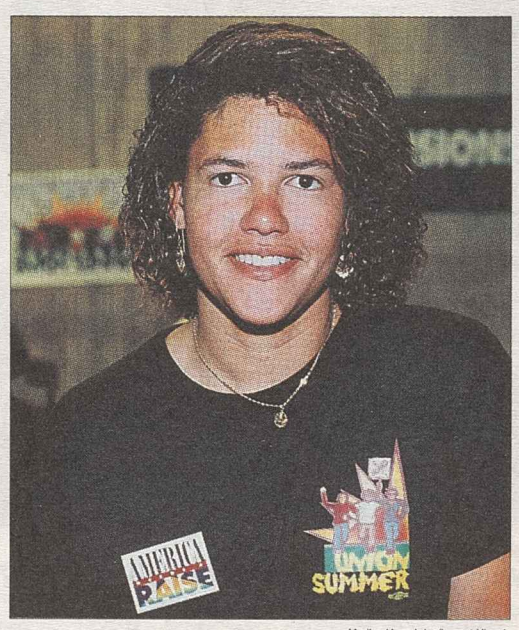


GCIU's Jack Howe makes a point at a press conference with Al Derey, president of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Employees, and John Lippert of The Newspaper Guild.

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 12 JULY 1, 1996

INSIDE



Marilyn Humphries/Impact Visuals

Carole Allen wore two hats in Boston, where she is the Union Summer site coordinator and was a participant in the last scheduled "America Needs A Raise" town hall meeting. **See stories, Page 1.**

LEGISLATION

3 *Wage, TEAM Act battles near head*

UNION NEWS

8 *Colorado grocery workers ratify pact*

UNION YES

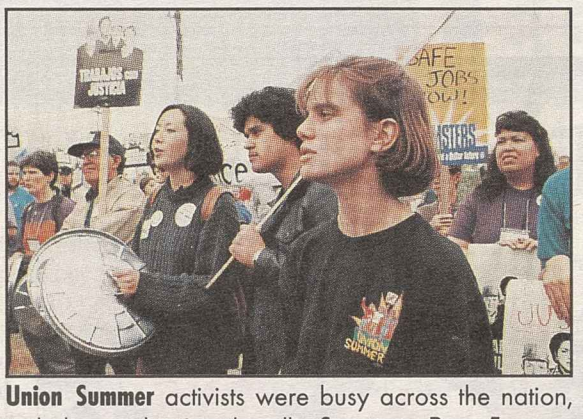
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AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 13 JULY 15, 1996



Union Summer activists were busy across the nation, including at this Seattle rally. **See story, Page 5.**

Workers win wage fight

Senate gets message, raises wage floor

By Mike Hall

Just hours after more than 1,000 workers from dozens of unions gathered on the Capitol steps to demand a raise for America's lowest-paid workers, the Senate easily approved an increase in the minimum wage.

The Senate also turned back a GOP attempt to scuttle the bill through an amendment denying the raise to millions of workers. The defeat of the amendment was met with loud cheers and high-fives from some 120 union members assembled in a Senate hearing room to watch the floor action.

"I want to thank all of you for your hard work in this victory," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the workers.

The Washington effort to boost the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 in two increments capped the fight, but the win can be traced to tremendous AFL-CIO grass-roots action and media campaigns waged throughout this year.

Aimed first at dozens of House members nationwide, the AFL-CIO's success at bringing the wage issue to the forefront surprised political observers and sent GOP opponents into a tizzy of tirades and retaliation efforts against the labor movement. **(See story, below.)**

The federation kept the pressure on with ads during the July 4th holiday weekend in several states, targeting senators who were crucial in overcoming the Republicans' numerical advantage. In addition, thousands of calls were made on the AFL-CIO's toll-free congressional hotline.

In the end, five Republicans voted against their own party's amendment to gut the bill. The five, Ben "Nighthorse" Campbell (Colo.), Alfonse M. D'Amato (N.Y.), Mark O. Hatfield (Ore.), Jim M. Jeffords (Vt.) and Arlen Specter (Pa.), were joined by all 47 Democrats in the 52-46 win.

President Clinton had labeled the exemptions, pro-

Continued on Page 3



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

More than 1,000 demonstrators rallied on Capitol Hill July 9 in support of an increase in the minimum wage and against the so-called TEAM Act, which would legalize company unions, and a national "right-to-work" bill.

Anti-union initiatives beaten back

Working families won two hard-earned victories July 10 when the Republican-controlled Senate failed to muscle through a national "right-to-work" bill or to pass the so-called TEAM Act with enough votes to overcome a promised veto.

The TEAM Act passed very narrowly, 53-46, with only two Democrats defecting, and supporters of the "right-to-work-for-less" bill could muster only 38 votes in an effort to shut off a Democratic filibuster.

"We've stood up to bullies before, and today we showed that workers will continue to win out over the best that the enemies of working families can dish out," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

But he warned that the Senate victories "are likely to exacerbate the attacks on working families and their unions launched by the current Republican leadership of the U.S. Congress."

The increasingly shrill assault on organized labor, ranging from threats to sue television stations that air AFL-CIO ads to phony hearings on union "corruption," has not cowed the federation, which launched another series of ads and grass-roots activities to expose efforts to cut Medicare. **(See story, Page 3.)**

"The rights of working men and women are going to be tested on the floor of the U.S. Senate like no other time," Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) told more than 1,000 workers at a Capitol Hill rally. "It's a continuation of the anti-worker, anti-labor, anti-job Republican program. We've got to turn thumbs down on these assaults."

The federation's top officers — Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson — joined rank-

Continued on Page 3



10,000 torches relayed to Atlanta, carried in Virginia by Deborah Sedillo Dugan of the AFL-CIO, were made by members of the Electronic Workers.

Golden games

Olympics are union-made

By Mike Hall

The union label is stamped all over the Olympic Games this month, from the 10,000 torches being borne across the country to the 83,100-seat Olympic Stadium.

Union members also will be reaching for the gold, including an extra-lightweight judo competitor and a super-heavyweight boxer.

Photo by Bill Burke/ Page One Photography

Almost as good as a gold medal to thousands of union construction workers was the employment boom during construction of the stadium and other Olympic sites.

Between the Olympic projects and a healthy area economy, construction locals were employing nearly 100 percent of their members, said Charlie Key, business manager of the Atlanta and North Georgia Building Trades Council.

The demand for skilled workers was so high that construction locals had to call on "travel-

Continued on Page 6

Painters touch up city while building bridges

By Muriel H. Cooper

After the glitter of the Olympics, the gold will still remain for the city of Atlanta and its residents, thanks to a unique program involving the Painters, industry and government officials.

"Operation Clean Brush" was described by Painters President A. L. "Mike" Monroe as the largest volunteer project — and the most ambitious labor-management cooperative service effort — ever undertaken by a building trades union.

About 25 local residents, Job Corps workers and 240 volunteer IBPAT journey workers from 10 states and the District of Columbia used union-made and company-donated Sherwin Williams paint to spruce up more than 250 homes surrounding the Olympic Stadium.

"We are trying to build community equity," Monroe said. "And community equity goes beyond simply working within a community and leaving — it builds value and commitment to

Continued on Page 6

ORGANIZING

Persistence pays off

Tired of management's broken promises, workers at Kingsbury Corp. in Keene, N.H., voted 123-103 for UAW representation.

It was the third organizing drive at Kingsbury in the past five years. "I knew the workers would not be persuaded by management's promises, which had been broken in the past," said UAW organizer Jerry Hurley.

"Once the campaign began, the company could not crack the solidarity of the union supporters," he said.

Things changed, Overnite

The Teamsters have turned up the volume in the organizing campaign at Overnite Transportation Co., telling the nation how the company backtracked on its promise to their workers.

Using a series of radio ads, the IBT said that Overnite agreed to pay workers time and a half for work beyond 47 hours. Now, only workers willing to work at their normal hourly rate will be given work in excess of 47 hours.

"What does Overnite's cop-out waiver mean?" asked IBT President Ron Carey. "The company doesn't keep its promises. What the company gives, the company can take away, anytime it wants.

"Overnite workers are standing together, stronger than ever, to get a written Teamster contract to make sure their benefits can't be taken away," he said.

D.C. Gas votes for IBT

Members of the International Union of Gas Workers, representing 1,000 Washington Gas Co. workers in the Washington area, voted to affiliate with the Teamsters.

"The International Union of Gas Workers has been standing up for working families, so they'll fit right in as Teamsters," said IBT President Ron Carey.

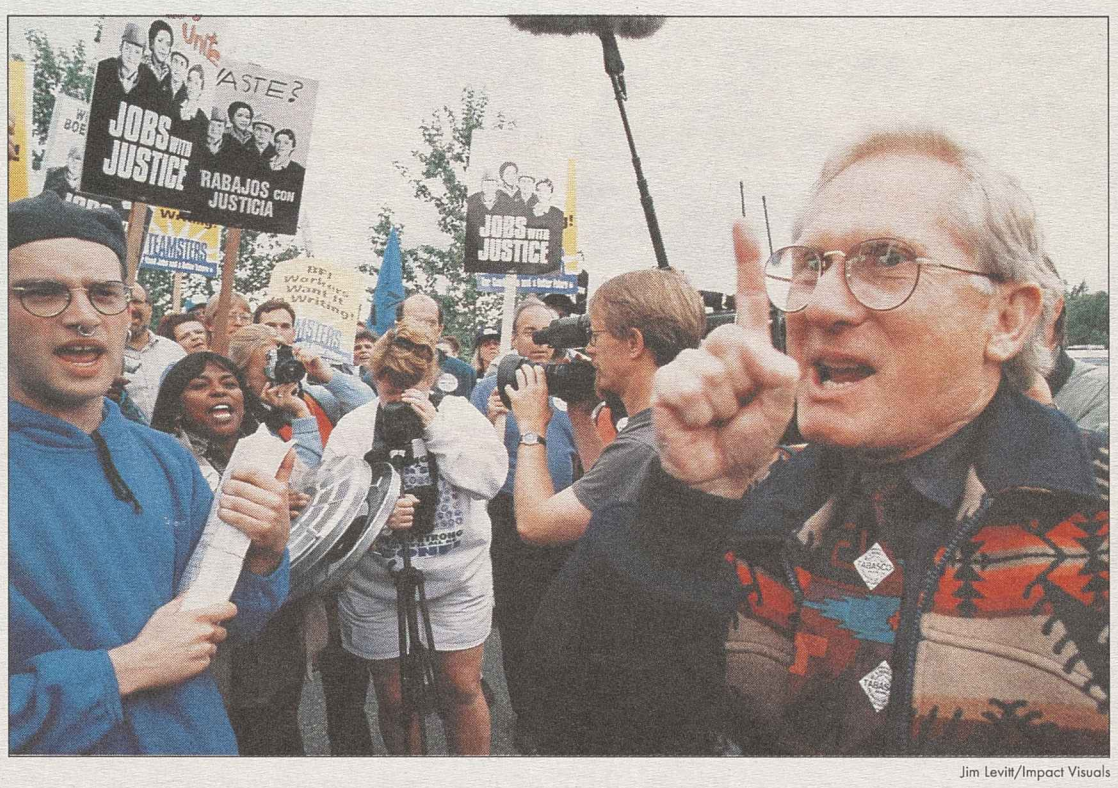
The IUGW has been locked in a contract battle with Washington Gas for more than a year. After they refused to go along with concession demands, the workers were locked out of their jobs for nearly four months. The workers were allowed to return — but only under the terms of a company-imposed contract.

Vote is safe landing

Workers at Irvin Aerospace in Red Springs, N.C., makers of parachutes for the U.S. Air Force and others, were unfazed by an anti-union employer campaign, voting 2-1 for UNITE representation.

Issues that motivated workers to organize included low pay, unaffordable health insurance, and unsafe and unsanitary working conditions.

"The company started making threats and promises just as soon as the workers started organizing, but they didn't fool anyone," said Connie Harrison, UNITE organizer. "The workers stayed focused on winning dignity and justice on the job."



Jim Levitt/Impact Visuals

Union Summer really got in the face of BFI's VanValkenburgh, who threatens a photographer after Chris Retherford, left, tries to deliver 10,000 petitions seeking union recognition.

Community supports waste workers

By David Kameras

More than two dozen Union Summer activists collected 10,000 petitions in the Seattle area expressing community support for sanitation workers at Browning-Ferris Industries seeking decent wages and working conditions.

Using their multilingual skills, the volunteers conducted house visits, leafleted shift changes and developed tactics for a June 28 rally at a BFI facility in Bellevue, where demonstrators engaged in mass picketing, blocked the entrance, used garbage can lids as cymbals and delivered petitions to management urging recognition of the Teamsters, who have been helping the workers in their drive for a union.

Union Summer activist K.L. Shannon told BFI workers they can count on union and community support. Echoing the rally's slogan, Atlanta AFL-CIO President Stewart Acuff declared that unionists are "keeping an eye on BFI."

Acuff and other activists were in town for the national meeting of Jobs With Justice, which organized the rally and provided much of its critical masses.

"I know these suckers," AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson told an earlier rally, also sponsored in part by Jobs With Justice, outside BFI's Southpark plant gate May 16. "We are talking about people who have no sense of justice and no sense of fairness for working people in this country."

Union and civic activists in Seattle have been dumping all over BFI for paying minimal wages to its largely Hispanic and Iraqi sanitation and recycling work force in a city where 90 percent of the garbage haulers are unionized.

After buying out a smaller local company and entering the Puget Sound market Jan. 1, BFI began paying its 125 area workers $5.50 an hour, as much as 30 percent less than its unionized competitors, with no benefits. After IBT Local 174 began an organizing campaign, the company raised wages to $6 and started offering health insurance.

> *"I know these suckers. We are talking about people who have no sense of justice and no sense of fairness for working people in this country."*
>
> **— Linda Chavez-Thompson**
> **AFL-CIO Executive Vice President**

With more than 70 percent of workers at BFI's Southpark plant having signed authorization cards, management still refuses to recognize and negotiate with the union.

Bob Hasegawa, secretary-treasurer of IBT Local 174, said many of the workers at BFI work two or three jobs, and still need their spouses and even children to work to make ends meet. "America needs to protect what we've already got," he said.

"We've got to educate them — we're going to organize them," added garbage hauler Perry Hicks.

BFI worker Don McIntosh said the company had threatened union activists with having to take their work breaks alone. "I think the company is anti-union, but we're going to make them pro-union real soon," he declared.

The May 16 rally followed a federation town hall meeting, where participants testified as to why America needs a raise.

BFI, the world's second-largest waste company, has paid tens of millions of dollars in fines and court settlements for breaking environmental and public safety laws, and was the target of the largest lawsuit ever filed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

AFL-CIO NEWS

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Workers mobilize to raise minimum wage

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posed in an amendment by Sen. Christopher S. Bond, (R-Mo.), as "poison pills" that would draw his veto.

However, an amendment to broaden the bill and remove some of the House-passed restrictions was defeated by a 52-46 margin, with all GOP members staying in the party fold. The vote for final passage was 72-24.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), who led the fight for the increase, pleaded for senators to "extend a helping hand, not the back of your hand, to all those who need and deserve this help."

The bill is set to go to a House-Senate conference to iron out differences in a tax package included in the overall legislation. But Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) has threatened to block the conference. There would be no tinkering with the wage portion of the bill, and Clinton has said he would sign the pay increase.

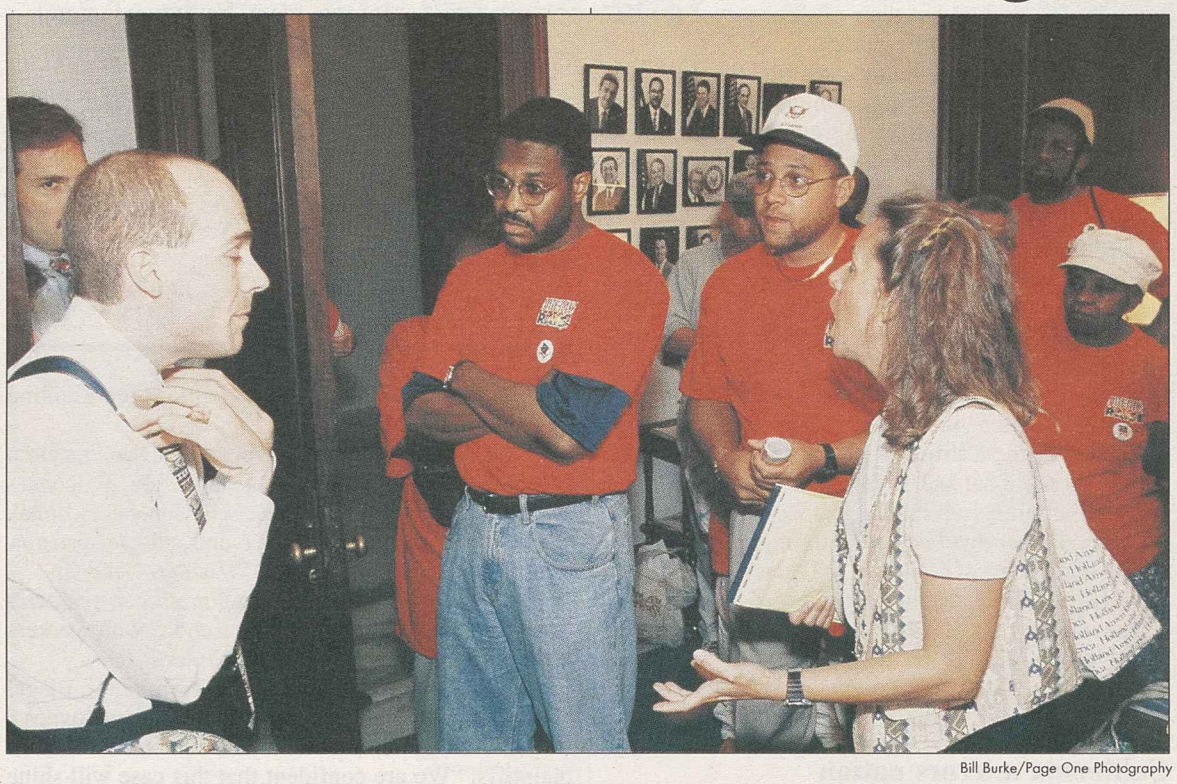
Much of the day's action occurred on the Capitol steps and in the hallways and offices of the Senate, as workers sought to find enough votes to defeat the Bond amendment. A group of about 20 Service Employees members and retirees from Pennsylvania tried to arrange a meeting with Sen. Rick Santorum (R), but were denied the chance to speak with their senator by his aides.

Santorum apparently was maintaining a consistent posture, as unionists said he has refused to meet with representatives of some 40,000 SEIU members since he took office.

"We would like for him to hear what we have to say," one union member told Santorum's chief of staff. "We've been trying to meet with him in his Philadelphia office on Chestnut Street, but that didn't work, so we came here."

Calling the issue of meeting with Santorum that day "a moot point," his aide even refused to guarantee a face-to-face meeting at a later date. Nervous staff members called U.S. Capitol Police, who sent a half-dozen officers to keep an eye on the mostly elderly union crowd.

The rank-and-file workers were joined by state AFL-CIO officials in lobbying senators and their staffs in the hours leading up to the vote.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Denys Everingham, an organizer for SEIU Local 36 in Philadelphia, pleads to no avail with an aide to Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), who flatly refused to meet with union members and retirees who were on Capitol Hill to discuss a proposal to raise the minimum wage and oppose a bill to legalize company unions.

Union members descending on the Capitol for the rally included those from AFSCME, AFT, Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Communications Workers, Electrical Workers, Food and Commercial Workers, Graphic Communications, Machinists, Postal Workers, Seafarers, Service Employees, Steelworkers, UAW and UNITE.

They cheered and chanted in response to remarks by the AFL-CIO's top leaders and several union presidents, as well as Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich and senators including Kennedy and Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.). Minimum-wage workers also described their predicament.

"If CEOs can get a 20 percent raise last year, then the work force ought to be able to get one, too," Daschle said.

Challenging GOP moves to keep the raise from some 5 million workers, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson said, "They are without shame. They don't know or understand you have to have two or three jobs," and still struggle to get by.

Reich held a small jar before the crowd with $4.25 in it and asked, "How can anyone raise a family, let alone support themselves" on the minimum wage. He then dropped 90 cents into the jar and asked Republican opponents, "Why should this be such a big deal?"

TEAM Act sure to fall with veto

Continued from Page 1

and-file workers and affiliated union officers for two days of intense lobbying on Capitol Hill against the latest package of anti-worker bills.

State AFL-CIOs and central labor councils rallied their members, who kept Senate office phones ringing through the federation's toll-free congressional hotline.

The misnamed TEAM Act, S. 295, is anathema to unions because it would give employers the right to pick workers' representatives in setting up committees to discuss conditions of work — essentially legalizing company unions.

TEAM backers claim that National Labor Relations Act rules against these employer-dominated committees prevent workers and management from cooperating on workplace issues. But Kennedy called it "a solution to a problem that doesn't exist," noting that 30,000 labor-management groups have been established and only 15 cases have been ruled on by the NLRB.

"It overturns one of the fundamental protections of American law that employers cannot set up company-dominated unions as a trick to prevent workers from joining real unions," he said.

Sweeney noted the bill "got a heavy push forward by some of the biggest corporate lawbreakers and special-interest seekers in America," yet failed to come anywhere near a veto-proof margin.

The Republicans had banked on several Democratic defections to bolster their margin on the TEAM Act, but only Sens. Sam Nunn of Georgia and Ernest Hollings of South Carolina backed the bill. Colorado's Ben "Nighthorse" Campbell was the lone Republican who voted against it. The 53-46 vote was far short of the 67 votes needed to override the veto President Clinton has pledged.

The right-to-work bill, S. 1788, was brought straight to the floor without a mark up. Its fast-track trip to the floor was "a blatant payoff to an extremist conservative organization and a slap at the working people who have worked so hard to convince Congress to increase the minimum wage," AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor said.

"The bill's defeat (61-38) is a resounding win over the bully payback tactics of this Congress," Sweeney said.

"This bill should be called the National Free Loaders bill because it gives people the right to all the benefits of union membership without having to pay for them," Kennedy said. He called it a "direct on attack on the ability of working people to protect their economic interests."

"Only 21 states have seen fit to enact right-to-work laws, 18 of those prior to 1959," and only five in the past 40 years, Taylor said. Not one of those states has a pay level above the national average and none rank in the top 15 states for annual worker pay.

In a related development, House Republicans staged another showy subcommittee hearing trying to link unions with corruption. Earlier this year, House leaders urged all GOP members to dig for as much dirt on unions as possible. They have issued alerts and faxes dredging up years-old charges.

Sweeney pointed to a "a well-coordinated 'big-lie' scheme to undermine and distract attention from our efforts."

The attack on workers was in evidence on the appropriations front, as the House approved a Labor/Health and Human Services spending bill, H.R. 3755, that would exempt thousands of small businesses from the NLRA by raising the revenue threshold required before the labor law applies. The bill also would make it more difficult for unions to organize multisite employers.

But a provision to prevent the Occupational Safety and Health Administration from developing and issuing ergonomic guidelines was stripped from the bill by a 216-205 vote on July 11.

The bill now must go to the Senate.

— Mike Hall

AFL-CIO remains on offensive with new Medicare ads

Refusing to bow to strong-arm tactics by Republican congressional leaders, the AFL-CIO launched another round of ads attacking proposed Medicare cuts.

The new ads, running in 33 congressional districts, are backed up by an intensified grassroots campaign asking Congress not to vote against seniors. The ads highlight elected leaders' votes last year to eviscerate Medicare, and focus attention on the current Medicare debate.

The House and Senate are expected to vote on new Republican Medicare cuts this summer or after Labor Day.

One of the new ads features a clip of a news conference by House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) in which he says about Medicare, "Now, we don't get rid of it in round one, because we don't think that's politically smart and we don't think that's the right way to go through a transition. But we believe it's going to wither on the vine."

The ad goes on to note that the lawmaker in that district in 1995, "voted with Newt Gingrich to cut Medicare and give new tax breaks to the wealthy. Now comes another vote. They're after Medicare again." It then asks viewers to call their lawmakers and oppose Medicare cuts.

During the last AFL-CIO campaign on Medicare cuts and the minimum wage, the Republican National Committee tried and failed to bully 60 television stations into pulling the ads, warning them they may be "exposed to legal action."

— Mike Hall

Hospital privatization battle rages

By Colleen M. O'Neill

The latest in a series of privatization skirmishes erupted at the University of California last month as both sides staked out their positions over the UC Medical Center in San Francisco.

A coalition of unions representing the facility's employees filed suit seeking an injunction barring the UC Board of Regents from merging the center with the Stanford University Medical Center. Similar plans are in motion at each of the university's four other medical centers.

"The regents' previously undisclosed plan calls for transfer of university medical centers and other public assets worth hundreds of millions of dollars to private entities, abandonment of the essential public health mission of university patient care operations and subordination of academic medicine to purely commercial interests," the suit reads.

AFSCME, the California Nurses Association, University Professional and Technical Employees (CWA) and the San Francisco Interns and Residents Association/UCAIR-Service Employees brought the suit, accusing the regents of collusion and secret deliberations in violation of the state's Public Records Act.

The unions also seek public hearings in the matter and a full disclosure of all details of the proposed merger and a guarantee of public participation in any planned merger.

California mirrors nation

The privatization battle is raging throughout the nation and California, as governments seek to cast aside workers in favor of profits.

California Gov. Pete Wilson (R) has put out a sweeping, yet still somewhat undefined, proposal to change the structure of California's government in accordance with his cherished privatization goals. For example, he announced a plan in April to privatize the state's workers compensation program, proposing to transfer the $7.3 billion fund to private carriers. He gave the fund's top officials just a few days' notice and didn't consult with them in developing the plan.

Additionally, Wilson has proposed to privatize the procurement of goods for state government — office supplies and the like — by signing a contract with a private company such as Office Depot and setting up accounts for each office with that company.

A $2.5 million feasibility study of that idea concluded it would save money; the workers doing the job day to day attempted to disagree and were muzzled, an SEIU spokesman said.

Workers and their unions have fought off the majority of nearly a dozen privatization bills introduced in California's split legislature; several remain as potential threats.

The Board of Regents is slated to make a decision on the UCSF-Stanford merger at its meeting this month.

"Whether this is a sale or a giveaway of the crown jewel of the UC system to the private sector, it is a disaster of unprecedented proportions for our patients, UCSF health workers, the people of San Francisco and the taxpayers of this state," said Libby Sayre of the UPTE, part of the coalition of unions representing employees at UCSF.

> *"We are confident that this case will shine the light of day on this profit-motivated scheme, and that the people of California will defeat this move to commercialize patient care at UC hospitals."*
>
> **— Union attorney James Eggleston**

UCSF is the second-largest employer in San Francisco and one of its largest property owners. UCSF operates medical services at San Francisco General Hospital, which serves many low-income and indigent patients. Many UCSF staff work at San Francisco General.

The twin swords of privatization and corporatization of medical care have struck a chord with workers and patients of the UC medical centers.

"The regents' haste to privatize is immoral, illegal and a disservice to UCSF patients and employees," said James Eggleston, attorney for the union coalition plaintiffs. "We are confident that this case will shine the light of day on this profit-motivated scheme, and that the people of California will defeat this move to commercialize patient care at UC hospitals."

The fight at Kaiser

The steps toward privatization also serve as another riser on the stairway toward corporate medicine. Health maintenance organizations came to life in the West; Kaiser Permanente and other HMOs count millions of Californians among their enrollees. Union members working for Kaiser know all too well the toll "restructuring" in the name of profit takes on patient care.

Contentiousness marked recent bargaining for several large SEIU locals with Kaiser, which reported nearly $3 billion in income over the past four years.

The unions and the company have been battling over the HMO's drastic restructuring plans, which include closing facilities, eliminating services and contracting with outside sources.

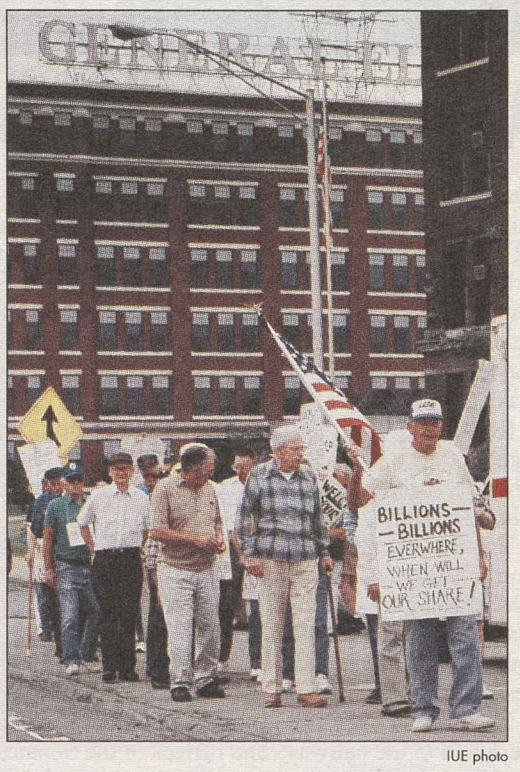
During the bargaining, SEIU President Andy Stern noted that "too many radical changes are happening in secret, and consumers are kept in the dark about the declining value of their health coverage."

Members of SEIU Local 250 in Northern California and SEIU Local 399 in Southern California recently ratified contracts. Shortly thereafter, some 2,400 Office and Professional Employees who work at Kaiser's San Diego facilities ratified a five-year pact, while nurses at Kaiser's Oregon and southwestern Washington operation, represented by Local 5017 of the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (AFT), agreed to a four-year contract.



Jack Miller/Miller Photography

More than 1,000 Postal Workers joined APWU President Moe Biller for a rally and picketing outside New York City's main post office July 1. The gathering was one of hundreds held across the country that day, the 25th anniversary of the union's formation and the incorporation of the U.S. Postal Service as an independent federal agency, to alert the public to postal mismanagement, privatization efforts and other threats to USPS workers. The Letter Carriers held similar rallies nationwide on June 15.



IUE photo

Union retirees picket outside a GE plant in Schenectady, N.Y.

Retirees: Share the pension pie

General Electric workers, fed up with getting the smallest piece of the retirement pie, took their case to the streets recently during rallies in two dozen cities across the country.

Members of 15 unions representing GE workers comprise a Coordinated Bargaining Committee for GE employees, who seek a fairer share per worker from the overfunded company pension fund.

"All we want is what is fair," said CBC Steering Committee Chairman William H. Bywater, president of the Electronic Workers, at a gathering in Schenectady, N.Y. "GE workers who spent their lives building this company should not have to scrimp to make ends meet while the GE Pension Fund is grossly overfunded."

The fund currently holds $27 billion, with nearly one-fourth of that — $7 billion — in surplus. Even if GE doubled their pensions, the workers say, it still would hold a surplus.

Union members and the company both are obligated by contract to contribute to the fund. However, the company's obligations have been fulfilled through investment income since 1987, while workers have continued to contribute directly.

"The money belongs to workers," Bywater asserted. "All we are saying is let them have it while they still live and need it."

The 15 unions of the CBC are: Broadcast Employees, Carpenters, Electrical Workers, Firemen and Oilers, Flint Glass Workers, IUE, Machinists, Paperworkers, Plumbers, Professional and Technical Engineers, Sheet Metal Workers, Steelworkers, Teamsters, UAW and the unaffiliated United Electrical Workers.

While the GE pension fund has a surplus, many unionized workers are concerned with the solvency of their pension plans, even those insured under the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp.

A recent report on the PBGC concluded that the multiemployer pension plan insurance program is financially sound, but that payouts are suffering from inflation and changes are needed. When a plan becomes insolvent, PBGC provides the funds to pay benefits at the guaranteed level.

Legislation passed in the House and Senate to raise the minimum wage also takes care of that deficiency, with an increase that is double the level of the current guarantee. The $2.60-per-participant annual premium was unchanged.

Despite the obvious need to improve the security of existing pensions, congressional Republicans last year pushed a measure to open up pension funds to CEOs for purposes unrelated to workers' benefits. President Clinton vetoed that measure.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

Union Summer puts heat on bad employers

By Muriel H. Cooper

With the second of three waves of Union Summer at midpoint, activists from around the country are fulfilling a promise made during the winter.

"To every employer who wants to take the low road, the poverty wages, the replaceable workers, we'll be at your doorstep, in your face, on your conscience," forewarned Richard Bensinger, director of the AFL-CIO's Organizing Department.

Union Summer activists are the ever-present shadow — a strong cadre of college students and young workers going door to door, running side by side and standing in judgment of the thousands of businesses and managers who will not provide better working conditions and a sense of dignity in the workplace.

Activists in Hilton Head, S.C., declared workers' independence from economic tyranny and social injustice as they participated in the town's July 4th activities — and opened residents' and tourists' eyes to a clear view of the resort paradise.

Rallying in support of workers seeking a first contract at the plush Melrose Club, about a dozen activists carried Union Summer banners and signs saying, "Workers Running to Keep Up" and "Wages Aren't Keeping Pace," as they walked and ran in the annual 5K race.

The next day, under the direction of site coordinator Simon Greer, they performed "guerilla theater" poolside at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, trying to draw guests into a conversation about the plight of workers.

"We got our message across in terms of the people watching," said Sheila O'Farrell. "We handed out fliers and people read them, and they were listening to what we were saying."

The Melrose workers still are fighting for a first contract after voting for representation with the Operating Engineers almost two years ago.

"The workers aren't asking for much — just their fair share," said Doris Grant, an "agitator" for the Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment, a community group that is supporting union efforts to improve working and living standards.

"They say that $21 million was generated in Hilton Head in one weekend during the MCI Heritage Golf Classic," Grant noted. "The owners are riding in Lexuses while the workers are making $4 to $5 an hour."

The Hilton Head situation is more typical than unusual. Across the country, Union Summer activists working in coalition with community and religious groups are hearing the same song, sung with New York, New England, Hispanic, Southern and Asian accents.

In Seattle, activists played a vital role in energizing community support for workers at Browning-Ferris Industries. The largely Hispanic and Iraqi sanitation and recycling work force makes as much as 30 percent less than its unionized competitors. **(See story, Page 2).**

"Union Summer has been a tremendous boost for the union and in building community momentum," said Jonathan Rosenblum, the site coordinator. "During the three short weeks they were here, the activists collected thousands of community support petitions, registered voters, shut down a nonunion hiring hall by salting and put together a massive demonstration at BFI."

Twenty-five activists in Sacramento are supporting the Justice for Janitors campaign, visiting health care workers at their homes and working on boycotts against the Hyatt Regency and Beverly Garland hotels.

New York City activists began the first of two waves in July with informational leafleting during a hearing on "perc," a toxic chemical used by dry cleaners located in apartment buildings and near food sites.

"Even if you live on the third floor of the building, the chemical still seeps in," said site coordinator Gretchen Primack. "We want cleaners to use a wet-cleaning method or transfer their business away from high-density populated areas."

The activists also are doing extensive research, tracking companies, labels and jobbers in the textile industry in an effort to educate the public about working conditions and the point of origin of manufactured goods.

In Detroit, activists participated in an action to mark the first anniversary of the Detroit newspaper strike, while those in Nashville demonstrated on the second anniversary of the Bridgestone/Firestone strike. **(See stories, Page 12).**

St. Louis activists are leafleting with the Leather Goods, Plastics and Novelty Workers, as well as organizing for AFSCME's first-contract campaign at Beverly Farm. They also are supporting striking workers at McDonnell Douglas.

Activists in Boston are rallying support for state legislation to give women three years, rather than six months, to report sexual harassment or rape on the job.



Jim Levitt/Impact Visuals



Photo by Daz Lamparas

Ciara Wilson, a Seattle Union Summer activist, marches at the University of Washington in support of campus workers, members of the Service Employees. In a rally in San Francisco, at right, Frieda Ravasco, Amelia Borofsky and Caitlin McCune join union members and nine other Union Summer activists in solidarity with 20 million Brazilian workers on strike for better wages and working conditions.



Pauline Steinhorn/AFL-CIO

Union Summer activists wore signs backing workers at the Melrose Club in Hilton Head, S.C., as they participated in the annual July 4th 5K run. Others held up signs along the route to inform the public of the workers' plight.

Southern bus tour links civil rights, economic justice

Thirty Union Summer activists, along with AFL-CIO officers and representatives from the Food and Commercial Workers, will travel by bus through the South to organize low-wage health care workers and encourage voter registration.

The July 21-Aug. 11 Southern Bus Tour is part of the AFL-CIO's successful national Union Summer campaign, sending young workers and college students around the country to work for workplace rights and social justice.

It also ties in with the UFCW's "Care for the Caregivers" campaign, focusing on the struggles of low-wage nursing home workers and their right to organize a union.

The bus tour, like the entire Union Summer effort, is patterned after the historic 1960s Freedom Summer, when thousands of young people journeyed to the South to fight for civil rights and social justice.

"While they are advancing workers' rights, these young activists are learning firsthand that the labor movement is at the heart of the struggle for fairness and justice in America," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

"Our objective is to show the interconnection between the fight for political justice during the civil rights movement and the fight for economic justice today with the labor movement," added UFCW President Douglas H. Dority.

The tour will begin in Memphis, Tenn., where the Rev. (Dr.) Martin Luther King Jr. was killed while supporting sanitation workers during a 1968 strike. The 'Care-A-Van' will depart for Jackson, Miss., on July 25, stopping at the Conagra catfish plant.

The activists will spend a week in Mobile, Ala., doing intensive hands-on organizing with nursing home workers.

On Aug. 4, activists and community supporters will rally and walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., where civil rights activists walked 30 years ago.

The activists will continue organizing activities, coupled with historical lectures and events, in Montgomery and Birmingham, Ala.

— Muriel H. Cooper

For workers, there's gold in those games

Continued from Page 1
ers" from other locals outside the Atlanta area.

Hard work pays off

But labor's participation in the site-building and other aspects of the games did not come easy.

"We started from a place where they didn't want to have anything to do with the labor movement, to signing an agreement for union wages, benefits and training on the stadium," said Atlanta Labor Council President Stewart Acuff.

After putting 10,000 people in the street, helping elect a pro-union mayor and generally "raising hell . . . we got union people on every one of the construction projects," Acuff said.

A 1993 wage agreement covered the stadium, where 80 percent to 90 percent of the work was done by union members, Acuff estimated. Unionists also helped build the Olympic Village and other facilities.

"The effort we put forth on construction has made a major impact in the area," said Key, who noted the unions' success could be beneficial to organizing in the right-to-work state.

Wall-to-wall union

Construction workers weren't the only winners, Acuff said. "CWA is doing communication, ATU is doing transportation. The bricks in the stadium were made by Steelworkers. GCIU's doing the printing. For the first time, we have a wall-to-wall for all events with the Stagehands (IATSE) union," he said.

The broadcast of the Olympics will be made possible by members of Television and Radio Artists, CWA's Broadcast Employees and the Directors Guild of America.

A dispute over 350 broadcast technician jobs has posed a dilemma. Originally, Olympic organizers wanted to import foreign technicians for all these jobs, and the Electrical Workers and NABET vehemently objected. But the Department of Labor brokered a tentative solution in early July that sets aside half the jobs for U.S. workers. Both unions have had to scramble to fill those slots at the last minute.

Even before the games open July 19, most Americans will have seen the Olympic torch during its 84-day cross-country run. The torches used, some 10,000 of them, were assembled by members of Electronic Workers Local 621 in Erie, Pa.

The runners, some of whom are union members, could purchase the torches they carried as souvenirs after their quarter-mile segments. Ironically, Key, who is scheduled to run when the flame arrives in Atlanta, may be in Denver on union business.

Union competitors

Super-heavyweight boxer Lawrence Clay-Bey is an AFCSME member and a corrections officer in Chesire, Conn. The 30-year-old, 245-pound boxer holds the U.S. amateur title, has beaten the world title holder and currently is ranked No. 1 internationally.

Union members who go to the movies may recognize judo athlete Hillary Wolf. The 19-year-old extra-lightweight (106-pound) competitor is a Screen Actors Guild member who has appeared in "Home Alone," "Home Alone II" and was the lead in "Big Girls Don't Cry."

You can read more about Wolf and Clay-Bey in the summer issue of UnionPlus, the feature magazine of the AFL-CIO's Union Privilege program.

Program paints houses, trains Atlanta workers

Continued from Page 1
the community that lasts long after the project has been completed. We are in this for the long haul."

The three-month program, which ends July 16, has been especially attractive to the city and business community, which are seeking innovative ways to train low-wage and unskilled residents.

"This program is not just about painting houses," said Atlanta Mayor William Campbell. "It's about training people to become painters, who then have a craft and skills after the project is over."

Much of the prep work was done by a dozen women employed by the Atlanta Housing Authority, who worked on Fridays as cycle apprentices in IBPAT's Local 193. The women completed a six-month pre-apprenticeship program and now are full apprentices in the local.

Another dozen women and men, part of the mayor's Jobs for the Homeless program, had been underemployed or unemployed for some time. Several of these workers will be taken into the union's apprenticeship program.

The union is working with the city to secure training and "responsible contractor" language in all future city contracts, Monroe said. This will create jobs for Atlanta residents and enable organized labor to strengthen its presence in the city.

"Operation Clean Brush demonstrates what we can do if we work together," said Campbell.

"This is just another example of our cooperative relationship with the city and its mayor," added Stewart Acuff, president of the Atlanta Labor Council.

The IBPAT plans to continue to empower communities long after the last cornice dries in Atlanta, Monroe said. "We are hoping to use the success of 'Operation Clean Brush' to gain entry into other cities in the South and across the country," he said.



Painters photo

Two of the dozens of local residents able to become Painters apprentices spruce up housing around Atlanta's Olympic Stadium in a special program designed by the union and community groups.

Upon completion of the apprenticeship program, the workers will receive a Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training certificate, which can convert to college credits toward an associate's degree from Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va. — an arrangement the union developed with the university.

"We're not just about jobs. We are about careers," said Monroe. "By finishing the apprenticeship program, these workers will have a marketable skill and a head start on a college education," he said.

UNITE: Peerless suits Macy's shame

UNITE is taking its human rights case against a Canadian suit manufacturer to the doorstep of Macy's department stores, which market the suits under the "Macy's Men's Store" label.

The union wants Macy's to take immediate steps to stop sexual harassment, discrimination and numerous human rights violations at Peerless Clothing Inc. of Montreal.

Justice invaded 34th Street last month as almost 1,000 UNITE members demonstrated inside and outside of Macy's flagship New York City store, chanting "Shame on Macy's." Similar demonstrations and leafleting have been held outside other Macy's stores around the country.

"We are saying to Macy, 'If your name is on the merchandise, you have a responsibility for how it's made,' " said Jay Mazur, president of UNITE.

Peerless also makes suits under the Kasper, Brandini and Fiori labels, as well as the Chaps and Ralph labels under license from Ralph Lauren, the union said.

Peerless employs 2,000 workers, most of them immigrants from Asia and Central America. The workers have been fighting for several months to end discrimination and improve factory conditions.

The workers also receive more than a dollar an hour less than workers at other unionized piece-work manufacturers in the area.

The Canadian Labour Congress has officially condemned Peerless Clothing for "exploiting its workers and denying them their basic trade union and human rights," said Bob White, president of the CLC.

Earlier this year, workers filed a record number of complaints with the Quebec government, charging Peerless with ethnic discrimination, sexual harassment and other rights violations.

Since the workers have taken action, Peerless has fired or suspended at least 20 workers for criticizing working conditions.

COURTS

Polaroid shams exposed

Polaroid's management-picked employee committees violate federal labor laws and should be disbanded, an administrative law judge ruled.

The Employee Owners Influence Council, a 30-member group of employees, was formed in 1993 after the company eliminated an earlier group that was successfully challenged by an employee as "a tool of management."

The new committee, appointed by management and coordinated by the human resources director, reviewed the company's health plan and commented on plans to provide benefits through a health maintenance organization. The committees had no real power, because all final decisions were left to the company chief executive.

Such activities make it an illegal labor organization, Judge Marvin Roth ruled June 14. One of the reasons Polaroid management created the group, Roth ruled, was to prevent an "unwanted union" from using the company's "lack of structure" for worker participation as a wedge for organizing.

Bayou charged again

The National Labor Relations Board issued a new unfair labor practices complaint against Bayou Steel Corp., accusing the company of 12 infractions of federal labor law, including violating an agreement that would have settled previous charges brought by the Steelworkers.

As a result, the board vacated the settlement agreement and set hearings for Sept. 23 in New Orleans on the new charges.

The new charges allege that Bayou's unfair labor practices caused and prolonged a strike by USWA Local 9121, which began in March 1993. Bayou also refused to bargain with the union in good faith and gave preferential treatment to employees who abandoned the strike, according to the complaint.

Caterpillar violates rights

Caterpillar violated the free-speech rights of a now-deceased UAW member when it suspended him for wearing a button lampooning company chief executive Don Fites.

In a case that demonstrates the agonizingly long process for resolving labor law cases, Administrative Law Judge James Rose ruled June 28 that Caterpillar in 1993 wrongly disciplined Joe Vasquez, then president of UAW Local 1415 in Denver. Vasquez was suspended for wearing a button saying, "Happiness is waking up in the morning and finding Don Fites' picture on a milk carton." Vasquez's suspension touched off a three-day strike by 30 workers at Cat's Denver parts facility.

Rose ordered Caterpillar to pay back pay and interest to Vasquez's estate and to the 30 UAW members who walked out after his suspension. Caterpillar announced it will appeal the decision.

The ruling brings to 28 the number of decisions in the 214 outstanding unfair labor practice complaints against Caterpillar stemming from a 17-month strike that ended in January.

UNION NEWS



Newsweek

BUSINESS

By Marc Levinson

For the state of Georgia, it is just a way to cut costs. But for the workers, privatizing the Georgia War Veterans Home this week means that their once coveted state jobs may now pay little more than minimum wage. Enter 26-year-old union organizer Tyrone Freeman and his band of young colleagues. The corps of youthful unionists descended on Milledgeville, a small town where unions are all but unknown, and claim to have signed up 80 percent of the home's orderlies and cleaners in a matter of weeks. Friday, the activists took the next big step: descending on the new manager to demand contract talks. While the kids have done the legwork, Freeman gives the credit to corporate America. "The fire may have been lit by organizers like myself," he says. "But the corporations have poured the gasoline on it."

After years of eclipse, America's much maligned labor movement is finally enjoying some sun. No, workers aren't joining up by the millions. And no, the halcyon days of the 1960s, when the esteemed heads of Big Business and Big Labor resolved the nation's problems over drinks at the White House, aren't coming back. But anger over corporate cutbacks and meager pay hikes is giving the movement its biggest boost in decades. Guided by careful market research and creative public relations—including hundreds of photogenic young organizers—labor is again a political force to be reckoned with. A new Newsweek Poll finds that 62 percent of Americans approve of unions, after a drop to 55 percent in 1981 from 66 percent in 1967. Which goes far in explaining why an ultraconservative Congress may soon vote to raise the minimum wage. Says pollster Kevin Phillips, a populist Republican, "A very significant subsection of the population is open to labor's arguments again."

Talk about an unanticipated development. Unions have been on the skids around the world, and Generation X was supposed to be the most anti-union bunch yet. These, after all, were kids who never learned that it took the bloody Battle of the Overpass to win those high wages at General Motors, kids who grew up in a world where unions were insignificant, even reviled. But while today's twentysomethings may not know what unions did for their grandparents, they do know about the insecurity of life in the '90s. "I hear this all the time, that the labor movement had its place but now it's not needed," says Jason Erlich, 23, who's organizing research workers in the vast University of California system. "It's needed more than ever." Some professionals and employees unlikely on past picket lines —like HMO doctors and university clerical workers—may become promising candidates for unionization. The young are especially sympathetic to the cause. Among people 18 to 29, 58 percent view unions favorably, according to Newsweek's Poll. Labor has moved to capitalize on the trend by recruiting students to join its "Union Summer" organizing campaign. "Baby boomers represented the worst case for unions, politically," says Geoffrey Garin, who polls for the AFL-CIO. But "people in their 20s and early 30s turn out to be much more open."

If there was a single turning point for the union movement, it came with the flight attendants' strike at American Airlines in November 1993. The Association of Professional Flight Attendants is no tower of strength, and American was expected to break the strike quickly. But the largely female union had spent months telling members and passengers how little newly hired flight attendants could earn. "We worked very hard to help the public understand what the strike was about," recalls president Denise Hedges. Travelers and politicians rallied to the APFA's side. After five days, American struck a deal.

The lessons of the APFA strike resonated through the labor movement. Communicate. Sound a clear, simple message. Talk about issues that matter to average people, such as the wages awaiting their kids. AFL-CIO surveys found that members felt unions to be too partisan. That's why, instead of taking potshots at Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole, the union federation's TV and radio ads aim at individual members of Congress who oppose a higher minimum wage or favor curbs on Medicare. Slogans such as "America Deserves a Raise" were consumer-tested with a rigor that would do Procter & Gamble proud. If it happens that more of the targets are Republicans than Democrats, well, that's a conclusion for you to draw. "When we ran our last series of minimum-wage ads, two days later a group of Republicans introduced a bill to increase the minimum wage," says AFL-CIO vice president Richard Trumka. "We think we did our job."

Labor's new popularity is being felt in local politics, too. This month's Olympics in Atlanta may be the most heavily unionized ever, with everything from stadium construction to the setup of the closing ceremonies being handled by union workers. The reason: the long-somnolent Atlanta Labor Council joined with neighborhood groups to back the 1993 election of Mayor Bill Campbell, and Campbell repaid the favor by naming Labor Council president Stewart Acuff to the board of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. In Los Angeles, where union organizers are targeting immigrant janitors and dry-wall installers, Mexican-American Miguel Contreras just became the first non-Anglo to head the local labor federation. Those grass-roots successes, in turn, make the movement more appealing to people like 26-year-old Carla Naranjo. The daughter of Ecuadoran immigrants, Naranjo returned from a Fulbright fellowship to attend the AFL-CIO's organizing school. Now she's organizing garment plants in Texas. "I wanted to help the Latin community in some way, and the best way to do that was the labor movement," she says.

Recruits like Naranjo are good news for labor. But reversing trade unionism's decline, the announced goal of new AFL-CIO president John Sweeney, may be beyond the reach of even the most ambitious youth movement. Only one private-sector worker in nine now belongs to a union. Last year saw the smallest number of government-supervised workplace elections in half a century, and unions won barely half the elections they petitioned for. Gregory Tarpinian of the Labor Research Association, a union consultant, estimates that adding a million new members to today's 16 million would take a mind-boggling $350 million worth of organizing. Labor can't enhance its political clout without adding to its rolls. Union chic has made labor popular. But can it make labor grow?

With Vern E. Smith in Atlanta, Jeanne Gordon in Los Angeles and Jeremy Kahn in New York

The 'best way to help': *Latina union organizer Carla Naranjo in New York*

Job insecurity: *A tool for organizer Erlich*

Business poured on the gasoline: *Tyrone Freeman on the job in Milledgeville*

WORKING

It's Hip to Be Union

Why organized labor is no longer reviled

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High-profile AFL-CIO campaigns like Union Summer and the nationwide town hall meetings on why America Needs a Raise have generated positive media coverage for the labor movement in recent months, including this July 8 article in Newsweek and a similar piece in the July 15 edition of Time. A new Newsweek poll finds that 62 percent of Americans approve of unions, up from 55 percent in 1981. Among young people, 68 percent view unions favorably.

Fight for justice is mushrooming

Farm workers' bid for recognition stymied by law

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The struggle of mushroom pickers at Quincy Farms to gain union representation has been adopted as a cause for the entire labor movement.

More than 75 percent of the 600 farm workers signed union cards authorizing representation by the Farm Workers. Under U.S. labor law, that would be enough to require a union election. But agricultural workers are not protected by the law.

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, state Rep. Anthony Hill, women's movement pioneer Gloria Steinem, Union Summer activists and thousands of trade unionists and community and religious leaders have joined the workers in demonstrations at various grocery stores across Florida.

More than 200 organizations across the country and the world also have written letters to company executives urging them to rehire workers fired after a union demonstration and to recognize their right to union representation.

Union Summer workers have succeeded in getting four grocery stores in Miami to stop carrying the company's Prime Label mushrooms. Two major supermarket chains, Harvey's and a Miami-based chain, also have stopped carrying the mushrooms. Harvey's operates more than 70 stores in north Florida and Georgia.

To further their cause, the farm workers traveled more than 1,300 miles to Sarver, Pa., home of Quincy's parent company, Sylvan Inc., to protest and meet with corporate officials.

The workers got their meeting, but Sylvan's chief financial officer turned their concerns aside, stating the company would deal with the employees "on a one-to-one basis."

Two days later, the workers demonstrated at Sylvan's stockholders' meeting in Reno, Nev. But after stockholders began to ask questions about how the workers were treated at Quincy, Chairman and CEO Dennis Zensen ended the meeting.

Sylvan had described Quincy as a "showcase" mushroom facility. But the mostly Latino and African-American workers describe Quincy as a "plantation." In July 1995, the workers asked the UFW for assistance because of the company's inhumane working conditions, poverty wages and exorbitant health insurance costs.

Most of the workers earn between $9,000 and $14,000 a year — 15 percent to 25 percent below the poverty line. Their poverty wages are compounded by the fact that it is very dangerous work.

The workers must climb between wooden racks to get to the mushrooms that are up to 10 feet high. The racks are wet and slippery, so as they attempt to balance and stretch in a dimly lit work area, workers often fall 5 to 10 feet, breaking and spraining ankles.

Workers also suffer from severe respiratory problems caused by temperatures that are constantly shifting between hot and cold, depending on the mushrooms' stage of growth.

As a result of the one-day strike in protest of the height of the mushroom racks in October 1995, management lowered the racks from 15 feet to 10 feet.

Last March, the UFW organizing campaign intensified after the company fired 85 workers and pressured the police into arresting 24 workers and their supporters.

Solidarity pays as janitors win big pay raises

Some 5,000 janitors in the San Francisco Bay area have proven that solidarity is truly what counts in strikes and contract negotiations.

The janitors, represented by Service Employees Local 1877, gained labor, community, religious and public support after a month of strikes and civil disobedience actions that focused on the fact that no worker should live in poverty.

The union, which represents janitors in Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, reached agreement June 28 with Western Management Alliance, which represents eight contractors that employ 80 percent of the union workers.

"This is the best agreement in the local's history," said Local 1877 President Mike Garcia. "It was not just a victory for janitors, but a boost to all workers in subcontracted industries."

Wage increases under the new agreement average 4 percent with the lowest salary tiers going up 5.5 percent. This pushes the janitors ahead of inflation and compares favorably to the average national wage increase won in collective bargaining, which was 2.5 percent in 1995.

All of the members of the local will be eligible for family health coverage by the end of the contract, with most having to wait only a year to start. The new pact also brings all 5,000 members of the local under one master contract that expires in the year 2000 — putting Local 1877 in step with janitors in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle and setting the stage for regionwide bargaining.

Other contract provisions include protection against sexual harassment and other illegal discrimination.

What started out as a rolling strike, hitting a different area each night, soon spread throughout the local's four counties. Workers at several sites stayed out a week or more: Chevron in San Ramon, IBM in San Jose and Metro Center in Foster City. Most of the buildings in downtown Oakland struck for three weeks straight.

"We saw leadership from lots of good people who'd never done anything like strike before," said Eugenia Gutierrez, the local's contract enforcement representative in Oakland. "Most of them were women. Many were single mothers, so they could only rely on one job, but still they were ready to go out to try to make better lives for their kids."

The 4,000-member Local 87, representing San Francisco janitors, announced June 21 it would honor Local 1877's picket lines. The local now is negotiating to replace its current contract, which expires July 31.

Janitors in Los Angeles, San Diego and Denver also honored Local 1877's strike with one-day pickets.

Local 1877 members work for contractors that are in turn hired by such large commercial real estate and high-tech firms as Hewlett-Packard, Cisco and Applied Materials.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

Unions hit aluminum triple: security, raises, power

Bargaining right up to the strike deadline, the Steelworkers, the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers and the Machinists reached agreement with Alcoa and Reynolds Aluminum that give about 17,000 workers a pay raise and a bigger role in company decision-making.

The six-year agreements, negotiated jointly and ratified by all the unions, include "a commitment from the companies to full employment with mechanisms to seek every possible alternative to layoffs," said USWA Vice President Richard H. Davis, the union's chief negotiator.

The companies agreed to the employment security guarantees as part of a "cooperative partnership" that gives union members a full say in company operations at every level. The partnership agreement follows the model of the "New Directions" bargaining program the USWA has negotiated with other major steel companies.

The partnership agreement, which calls job security a "priority objective," will be overseen by a top-level committee of company and union representatives that will meet at least quarterly to address such issues as safety and health, the company's strategic plan, technological changes and plans, staffing levels, customer evaluation, major organizational issues and facilities use.

At each plant, joint committees will deal with issues like safety, work redesign, work assignments and scheduling, planning for technological change and training.

The agreement also ensures that no employee will be laid off except as determined through the joint decision and responsibility process. The companies also agreed to neutrality in union efforts to organize workers at their nonunion plants.

The average worker's wage will increase about $1.45 per hour under the contracts, with a total $1.15 raise over the first five years and two increases based on grade that average 15 cents each. In addition, pension payments will increase between $210 and $330 per month for 30-year employees.

There is a contract reopener clause on all issues after five years. If no agreement is reached on the reopener, the economic portions only will be submitted to "baseball-style" binding arbitration, with the arbitrator selecting the proposal of one side or the other.

The USWA represents about 5,000 workers at five Alcoa plants and 10 Reynolds plants. The ABG represents about 11,400 members at six Alcoa plants and seven Reynolds plants.

The IAM represents some 600 workers at several Reynolds plants. Some 2,000 IAM members at the two companies ultimately will be covered by the agreement as old agreements expire, said IAM negotiator Jim Pinto.

— James B. Parks

BARGAINING

Jetmaker harasses strikers

The Machinists kept up the pressure on McDonnell Douglas as negotiations resumed July 3 in an effort to end the monthlong strike.

The IAM filed charges July 2 with the National Labor Relations Board that McDonnell Douglas illegally spied on and harassed its members during the strike. The company is infringing on the workers' right to strike, the union claims, by forcing the picketers to march dangerously close to moving traffic, in one case only 10 inches from moving cars.

So far three picketers have been hit by cars. Luckily, none have been critically injured.

The union also charged that squads from the security company hired by McDonnell Douglas, Asset Protection Team, are following strikers in vans, filming them wherever they go in hopes of provoking a confrontation.

Thousands of Machinists who hold stock in the aircraft company through the employee savings and investment plan are signing petitions directed at a trustee at Chase Manhattan Bank, who is legally responsible for representing the employees' interests. The petitions call for the trustee to fulfill its fiduciary obligation and push for a speedy and just resolution to the dispute.

IBEW, PG&E agree quickly

With only one day of negotiations and six months ahead of schedule, the Electrical Workers reached a tentative three-year agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric that raises wages and keeps most of the old agreement in place.

Members of IBEW Local 1245 will vote this month on separate contracts for clerical and physical workers that provide for a 3.25 percent pay raise in each of 1997 and 1998, and 3.5 percent in 1999. Wages for the 13,500 workers covered by the agreements range from $9 to $25 per hour. Results of the mail ballot should be announced in early August, the union said.

The union and PG&E extended three current agreements and added the pay increases and interim negotiations on retiree adjustments, said Local 1245 official Jack McNally.

Much of the union's attention is focused now on a partnership committee on issues dealing with the restructuring of California's utility industry, such as staffing changes related to automated meter reading.

The union claims reductions in staffing led to delays in restoring service after a harsh December storm. PG&E has cut 4,000 jobs from its work force since 1992.

Cincy Bell pact ratified

The Communications Workers overwhelmingly ratified a new three-year agreement with Cincinnati Bell that provides 2,000 workers with 10.5 percent pay raises.

The contract was approved by CWA Locals 4400 and 4401 by a 12-1 margin June 21. The last contract expired May 11. The workers covered include technicians, telephone operators, repair personnel and clerical workers.

Under the new agreement, workers will receive 3.5 percent raises in each of the three years. Bonus incentives were added, based on the company's service and financial performance.

A key provision of the deal is a flexible pension plan that allows workers who leave the company to take a lump-sum payment rather than lose their vesting. The workers wanted such a provision because Cincinnati Bell is streamlining operations. Since early 1995, the company has cut 400 jobs through retirements, buyouts and attrition; it plans to eliminate 400 more by the first quarter of 1997.

The agreement gives workers more job security by allowing CWA to have input into decisions on outsourcing. It also maintains the current employer-paid health benefits and improves dental benefits.

NBC pact finally OK'd

The last of 11 unit agreements that make up the master contract between the Broadcast Employees and NBC was approved June 13 by news writers in Burbank, Calif.

The five-year contract covers 2,200 NBC employees across the country who had been working without a contract since early 1994. The new contracts call for a 3.5 percent wage increase in the first year, 3 percent in the second and 3.5 percent in the third. The raises are effective from the date each of the 11 bargaining units ratified the deal, while the contracts are retroactive to April 1, 1994.

The news writers' contract allows NBC to use "daily hires" to make up 40 percent of the work force.

Trailmobile workers ratify pact

By James B. Parks

Locked-out Paperworkers celebrated Independence Day by returning to their jobs at Trailmobile Corp. after ratifying a new three-year contract that turned back all the company's concession demands.

"The unity of Trailmobile workers, coupled with UPIU's strategic campaign against the company's owners, has proven that union workers can stand up to corporate tyrants and win," said Gary Collins, president of UPIU Local 7591, which represents the locked-out workers.

The contract was ratified July 1 by a 70 percent margin. The vote came three weeks after workers had rejected the company's previous offer.

Instead of the three-year wage-freeze extension the company wanted, the new contract calls for a first-year increase of 18 cents an hour, followed by 20-cent raises in the second and third years. The current average wage for Trailmobile workers is $11 an hour.

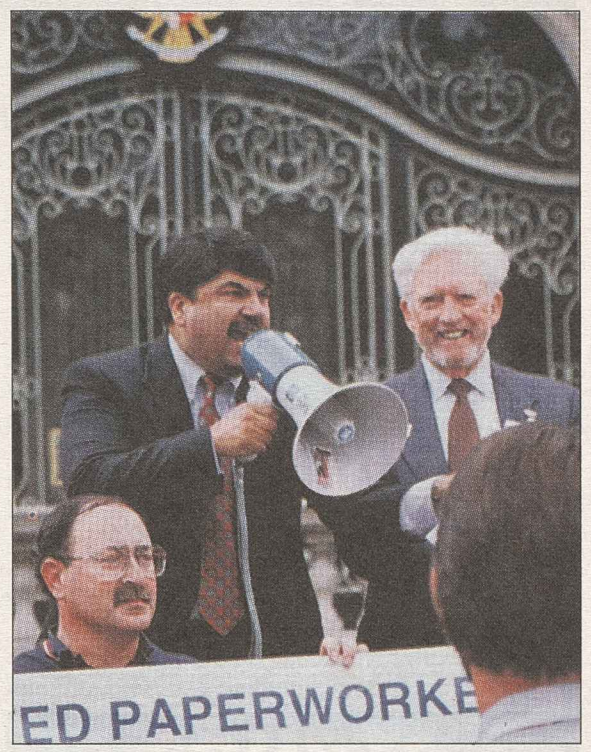
The pact also provides for continued negotiations on a new profit-sharing plan for workers. Management had proposed a profit-share deal in lieu of a wage increase. But the union rejected that offer, because a similar deal paid as little as $120 per worker over the four-year term of the previous contract.

The contract dropped company proposals to eliminate seniority in overtime assignments and to combine job classifications, which would have forced wage cuts of up to $1 an hour on many employees.

Some 1,200 UPIU members were locked out of the Charleston, Ill., plant Jan. 21, five days after the last contract expired. They were temporarily replaced by 500 scabs. Trailmobile manufactures over-the-road transport trailers and is privately owned by the Indonesia-based Gemala Group, which is controlled by the Wanandi family.

The global campaign against the Wanandis featured demonstrations June 19 in Washington and Canberra, Australia, to draw attention to the way the company has treated its locked-out workers. After the demonstrations, Trailmobile CEO Edward Wanandi contacted local union leaders in search of an end to the dispute.

"We are grateful for the tremendous solidarity of union members and so many others around the world which led to this victory against corporate greed," Collins said.



AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka spoke in support of Trailmobile workers at the Indonesian embassy in Washington just before the lockout was ended. Joining him were Paperworkers President Wayne Glenn (right) and UPIU Local 7591 President Gary Collins.

Rail unions push for new contracts

By David Kameras

Bargaining for national rail contracts has entered the home stretch, and workers want timely action on reaching the agreements.

The three presidential emergency boards empowered to make recommendations for settling bargaining disputes between rail labor and most of the nation's large freight railroads urged using an earlier arbitration decision affecting the United Transportation Union as a guideline for arriving at a final settlement.

In a June 23 decision, the boards adopted the UTU package, which combines general wage increases, lump-sum payments and a cost-of-living adjustment retroactive to last November, as a road map for reaching contracts with the Machinists, Maintenance of Way Employees, Sheet Metal Workers, Transportation Communications Union and Electrical Workers.

In a joint statement, the chief officers of the first four unions said the recommendations, while constructive, fell short in several areas. "Unfortunately, the unwillingness of rail management to offer any constructive proposals left the presidential emergency boards with little opportunity to find common ground" with rail employees, they said.

The unions, which represent more than half of all rail employees, noted that real wages of rail workers have declined by more than 12.5 percent since 1988, while the CEOs of the four biggest railroads saw their compensation jump by an average of nearly 20 percent last year, to almost $5 million each.

The labor leaders challenged the carriers to reach an agreement before the current 30-day cooling-off period ends. "A delay in a solution simply deprives rail employees of increases in pay and benefits even longer," they said. "We are opposed to a delay of any kind — no new boards, no additional cooling-off periods. We have been bargaining for nearly two years. We expect to have contracts at the end of 30 days and will vigorously oppose any attempt to delay new contracts."

Rail merger approved

In another major rail industry development, the three-member Surface Transportation Board July 3 approved a proposed merger between the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific railroads, while setting 35 conditions intended to keep what would be the nation's largest railroad competitive.

Rail labor has been almost evenly split on the issue, with unions representing slightly more than half the affected workers withdrawing their objections after reaching labor protection agreements with the carriers.

Metal Trades, Navy in shipyard accord

The AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department has reached agreement with the Naval Sea Systems Command to facilitate a number of work rule changes aimed at boosting productivity in the Navy's public shipyards.

The Navy facilities have been losing business in recent years to private-sector competitors, placing at risk jobs and even survival of the yards themselves.

Under the terms of the two-year pact, affiliated unions and management will negotiate supplemental agreements tailored to the individual requirements of the four yards at Norfolk, Va., Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Portsmouth, N.H., and Puget Sound, Wash.

Management will be permitted to assign workers to "helping-hand situations" to gain access to skills they have gained outside their craft jurisdiction, and to develop composite jobs involving cross-training among various crafts.

"Both the Navy and the unions recognize the importance of specific skills and training that each craft brings to the complex job of shipyard work," MTD President John Meese said. "This agreement honors those jurisdictional lines while adapting to realistic changes and competitive pressures shipyard workers are facing both from nonunion shipyards in the United States and from foreign shipyards."

Meese and Adm. Tom Porter, the director of naval shipyards who negotiated on behalf of the Navy, stressed that safety remains of paramount importance, and employees will not be assigned to work for which they have not been trained or checked out.

For its part, the Navy will have both incentives and obligations to improve job security and reward employee performance.

While the Navy's budget will "continue to be under severe budget pressures," NAVSEA's "overall budget will be enhanced by closer cooperation between labor and management," Porter said.

Beverly ordered to rehire nursing home strikers

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Workers' persistent efforts to gain better conditions for nursing home patients and workers at Beverly Enterprises facilities are showing some results.

Members of the Service Employees and Food and Commercial Workers have filed charges against management and picketed some 40 Beverly Enterprises nursing homes, garnering attention from congressional Democrats into the company's government contracts.

On July 8, the unions' persistance was rewarded with a 10(j) injunction placed by the National Labor Relations Board against Beverly to force the company from continuing its anti-worker, anti-patient practices and ordering it to rehire former strikers while the case is pending.

"This will put our people back to work," said David Snapp, SEIU's nursing home campaign director. It is "an indication the board will likely rule in our favor."

Beverly, the nation's largest nursing home chain, faces pending charges of illegally replacing striking workers, threatening union activists, denying access to union representatives and not bargaining in good faith. A hearing on these charges was to begin July 15 in Pittsburgh.

Some 1,200 SEIU members struck facilities across Pennsylvania for three days in April, and about a third of those workers were not allowed to return to work when the walkout was over.

The NLRB issued a 108-page complaint in May addressing those and similar charges against Beverly's management at 20 of its Pennsylvania nursing homes.

Ratcheting up the fight, the SEIU and UFCW put pickets in front of company facilities in 15 states last month, notifying family members and workers about Beverly's blatant violations of federal labor laws and its horrendous record of violations of patient care.

Along with the pickets, union members and permanently replaced Pennsylvania Beverly employees attended a company shareholder meeting in Alabama and held a vigil in front of Beverly CEO David Bank's house.

Meanwhile, Beverly, a bidder on a multistate nursing home contract with the Department of Veterans Affairs, came under attack by Democrats on the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees in the spring for the nursing home company's record of labor law violations.

A May 22 letter from Democratic members of the Senate panel to Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Jesse Brown asked Brown to refrain from awarding any national or regional contracts for nursing home care before providing certain information to the committee to help lawmakers determine whether legislative action is warranted.

Beverly currently has 360 separate contracts with the VA worth $19.8 million. The letter was signed by Sens. John J. Rockefeller (D-W.V.), the ranking minority member on the committee, Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.), Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.).

The letter also asked Brown about the possibility of debarring Beverly or other nursing home firms from VA contracts on grounds of labor law violations.

In addition, Brown was asked to provide information on whether there are other measures short of debarment the VA could take and the VA's current practice for evaluating the quality of care furnished to veterans in community nursing homes on VA contracts.

In a May 24 letter from eight Democratic members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), Brown was urged not to entertain any bids for contracts for long-term services "from entities that, with a clear pattern and practice, violate the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act."

The union also sent a letter June 12 to the VA's contracting officer requesting the agency cease business with Beverly because of its "illegal, unethical conduct."

UNION NEWS

No raids for AFT, NEA

The AFT Executive Council and the National Education Association Board of Directors have approved a no-raid agreement that would be effective Jan. 1, 1997, until May 31, 1998.

Delegates to the AFT convention will vote on the agreement in August. The vote of the NEA board of directors completes the NEA approval process.

The 17-month agreement will allow the two unions to move forward in their merger discussions.

UAW acts at Mitsubishi

The UAW will heighten awareness of sexual harassment problems and offer remedies at Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing Inc.'s Normal, Ill., plant.

The union's initiatives include a training program crafted to cover grievance handling, contract application, workplace diversity and discrimination awareness, including all forms of discrimination. The union also made a proposal to the company for a jointly sponsored, comprehensive sexual harassment awareness program that would involve virtually the entire Mitsubishi work force.

The union's training program will include local union officers, bargaining and civil rights committee members and district coordinators.

'Enforce child labor laws'

The United States should push for better enforcement of international labor standards and its own laws to eliminate illegal child labor, the AFL-CIO said during a Labor Department hearing on child labor.

Business and industry codes of conduct are important tools to combat exploitative child labor, said Anne Knipper, assistant to the AFL-CIO international affairs director. But even the best voluntary codes "cannot substitute for effective governmental enforcement of international labor standards," she said.

The Labor Department hearing coincided with the launch of a national "FoulBall" campaign aimed at child labor in the Pakistan soccer ball industry. An estimated 11,000 Pakistani children are involved in sewing soccer balls for export to the United States.

"The soccer ball industry must assume the responsibility of assuring — for the sake of exploited children as well as American consumers — that soccer balls are not made illegally by young children," said Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich.

'Fair wage' for Portland

The Portland City Council unanimously approved a proposal last month requiring contractors doing work for the city to pay their employees a minimum hourly wage of $6.75 per hour.

The ordinance calls for an increase in the "fair wage" rate to $7 per hour on July 1, 1997. It also encourages all contractors to provide medical insurance for their employees. Oregon's current minimum wage is $4.75 per hour.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Delegates to the HERE convention join hands in a rousing rendition of "Solidarity Forever."

HERE plans for growth, innovation

Chicago

The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees charted the union's course into the 21st century, "when the labor movement is at the crossroads," HERE President Edward T. Hanley said.

"This convention must be about the future," said Hanley, who was re-elected by the delegates. "It must be about moving ahead, about growing bigger, about gaining strength."

That message also came from AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, who noted that "working-class Americans and their families are hurting as never before (and) the labor movement has to respond as never before. The problem: America needs a raise. The solution: a bigger, stronger labor movement."

Although unemployment figures are improving, thousands of the working poor still live in poverty, Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich told the 300 delegates. Congressional passage of an increase in the minimum wage is a start towards lifting them up, he added.

Reducing the economic gap in the country is critical, the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson said. "It's the working poor and the growing disparity between rich and poor that is America's real problem. The inequality is so great that the nation's richest 1 percent hold wealth equal to the bottom 95 percent."

Mayors Willie Brown of San Francisco and Freeman Bosley Jr. of St. Louis voiced their support for strong unions. Bosley, who promised that St. Louis would roll out the welcome mat for union conventions, said strong unions guarantee workers a full day's pay for a full day's work.

Brown reminded delegates that union voters must play a big role in the 1996 elections if workers are to reverse the anti-worker legislation enacted by the current Congress.

Delegates expanded the union's executive board by five to guarantee more diversity in the leadership, and elected a new secretary-treasurer, John Wilhelm, the union's western regional director. Wilhelm replaces Herman Levitt, who retired after 14 years. The convention also voted to freeze the salaries of the union's top officers.

Delegates raised monthly membership dues in several steps, from the current $26.56 to $32.46 by Jan. 1, 2001, and froze the per capita tax at $10.38 per member per month through 1998.

In addition, the union established an ethical practices code and a board to review violations of that code with passage of two constitutional amendments. Those actions brought HERE into accordance with a consent decree between the union and the federal government.

The convention also heard a report on the innovative San Francisco project. The cooperative program between the union and the city's hotels features a "living contract" process of constant contract review, which allows both sides to quickly examine new issues and solve problems before they lead to strikes or work stoppages. By consensus, the contract can be rewritten to alleviate problems before its expiration.

The emotional apex of the convention came after an appearance by strikers from Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas, who have been out for almost five years.

Ray "Bubba" Turner, a sauce cook at the hotel for 24 years, told the delegates it's been a "tough fight, almost five years on the picket line. . . . We have to endure people coming by throwing bottles at us, calling us lazy, yelling 'Why don't you get a job.'"

The delegates responded to their plight by donating more than $100,000 to assist the strikers and their families.

Other speakers included Canadian Labour Congress President Robert White; Chicago Mayor Richard Daley; former U.S. Sen. Alan Dixon; and Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, archbishop of Chicago.

Interest rate fears greet employment numbers

By David Kameras

The Clinton administration can point to an increase in wages and an expanding job market as it gears up for a tough re-election campaign this fall.

But the overall tenor of the economy was less than sound — with a steady downbeat of corporate downsizing and a rumble of higher interest rates in the wings.

The sound reverberating through the media was that of stocks and bonds tumbling on Wall Street, as investors expressed fears that the Federal Reserve Board will use the jobs gain as a pretext for raising interest rates next month. Such a move would stifle investment and jobs growth and strangle the already weak recovery.

The central bank, which equates low unemployment with upward pressure on wages, has stoked fears of inflation to justify its tight-money policy, despite the fact that consumer prices have stayed below 3 percent for the 12 months ending in May.

Some 239,000 jobs were added to the economy in June, pushing the official unemployment rate down to 5.3 percent, the lowest point in six years. Average hourly earnings, meanwhile, rose 9 cents to $11.82. Coupled with a half-hour increase in the work week, average weekly earnings jumped $8.98 to $410.15.

Many of the new jobs created, however, may be gone by Labor Day. More than 12 percent of the total came in the Atlanta area, which is gearing up for the Olympics. And just as many jobs went to students in the work force just for the summer.

Still, Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich was elated. "June's unemployment numbers bring a double-barreled burst of good news for American workers: vibrant job growth and finally, a boom in hourly wages," he said the day after Independence Day.

Although Reich hailed the increase in the average weekly wage as "clearly the beginning of something to celebrate," a more accurate barometer of worker buying power — the inflation-adjusted real weekly earnings — declined 0.1 percent in May and has been in free fall for more than a decade.

Many of the new jobs created may be gone by Labor Day. More than 12 percent of the total came in the Atlanta area, which is gearing up for the Olympics. And just as many jobs went to students in the work force just for the summer.

Much of June's employment growth took place in retail trades, which added 75,000 workers, almost half in often low-paying eating and drinking establishments. The services sector added 99,000 jobs, and 23,000 positions opened in construction. But manufacturing unemployment was essentially unchanged at 18.4 million.

Further, the proportion of unemployed who had been jobless 27 weeks or more was 18.6 percent in June. This proportion has increased since February, and has been unusually high for a period of job growth.

Their fortunes were made worse by the continuing succession of large-scale downsizings, even as the financial press has begun to re-think mass layoffs and refer to them as "dumbsizing."

- Digital Equipment Corp. announced that it will cut 7,000 of its 60,900 jobs.
- Nabisco will cut 4,200 jobs from its global payroll over the next two years.
- In New Jersey, 252 state workers punched out for the last time, many the victims of Republican Gov. Christine Todd Whitman's privatization mania.
- New York's municipal hospital system laid off 1,600 workers in June, and another 2,000 terminations are planned for August.
- A merger of two Massachusetts hospitals may result in the layoff of 112 workers in Fitchburg.
- Clothes Connection, a major garment supplier to Wal-Mart Stores, which at its peak employed almost 2,000 workers in Santa Ana, Calif., is moving the last of its production to Mexico after being fined hundreds of thousands of dollars by federal and state agencies for violating labor and immigration laws.
- Ralcorp Holdings Corp., maker of Ralston-Purina products, is getting rid of 190 workers at its cereal plant in Battle Creek, Mich., and another 100 at its St. Louis headquarters.

Making a company lean doesn't necessarily make it anything but mean. The American Management Association, whose members employ one-fourth of the nation's workers, found that 62.8 percent thought productivity had either declined or stayed the same following a layoff.

"In the final analysis, cutting out the memory of an organization may do more harm than good to the bottom line," James E. Challenger, who tracks corporate layoffs, wrote in the Chicago Tribune.

While the conventional unemployment rate dropped in June, the Labor Department's alternative rate, which includes marginally attached and part-time workers, actually rose from 9.5 percent to 10.4 percent. Adding the 7.1 million officially unemployed to the 4.3 million working part time involuntarily and the 1.7 million discouraged from looking anymore, a total of 13.1 million were affected by total or partial unemployment.

United's foreign bases draw AFA ire

Pilots reject proposed contract from FedEx

United Airlines has undermined the job security of 20,000 Flight Attendants by moving ahead with plans to open new bases in Germany and Japan, unionists say.

"With their announcement, United has chosen a path of confrontation with its front-line employees," said AFA Master Executive Council President Kevin Lum in reaction to the carrier's decision, which followed the union membership's rejection of a new contract reached last January.

"Despite record profits, (CEO) Gerry Greenwald has decided to single out the employees who chose not to participate in the ESOP, and is setting the stage for a bitter and divisive fight," Lum said. AFA was the only employee group not to join the buyout of 55 percent of United's stock in 1994.

The airline already has flight attendant domiciles in Hong Kong, London, Paris, Santiago and Taipei, at the cost of at least 1,800 U.S. jobs, the union says.

"Exportation of our jobs kept the United Flight Attendants out of the employee buyout," said AFA President Patricia Friend. "Then management's overreaching on issues of raises, retirement and respect doomed our recent tentative agreement. Despite AFA's repeated attempts to resolve these matters peacefully, United management appears committed to confrontation.

"We are not looking for a fight, but we will certainly defend our jobs," she said.

Meanwhile, nonunion employees at United are bound by the terms of the 1994 buyout pact negotiated by the carrier and participating unions, the U.S. District Court for the 11th Circuit ruled July 8.

The court reasoned that no representative of the nonunion plaintiffs existed with whom the airline was required to consult, giving further credence to the notion that every employee needs a union.

In other airline industry developments:

- Air Line Pilots gave voice to their leadership's "grave concerns" by turning down a five-year first contract with Federal Express Corp.

With 88 percent of the ballots returned, 58 percent of the union members rejected an agreement reached after two years of bitter negotiations marked by management's union-busting tactics.

"The rejection of this proposal obviously indicates that a majority of FedEx pilots feel this is not an acceptable contract," observed Alan Samford, chairman of ALPA's Master Executive Council at the giant air courier.

After talks broke down late last year, the union put pressure on management by using self-help techniques, such as refusing voluntary or overtime assignments and placing advertisements in major newspapers warning customers of potentially unreliable service during the busy holiday season.

Some 1,700 of FedEx's 3,100 pilots belong to ALPA, and all would be affected by a settlement.

Samford said he expects the union to renew negotiations with management in the very near future. "The MEC remains confident that FedEx pilots are ready and willing to support the collective bargaining process in order to secure an agreement which is acceptable to the majority of FedEx pilots," he said.

- ALPA is opposing any rule changes for flight and duty time limits that serve to increase flight time limits and ignore research into the effect of sleep-cycle disruptions on fatigue.

The union opposes a proposed FAA rulemaking issued last December that would couple stricter duty time limits with flight time limits that would exceed today's rules. If implemented, the rule would extend the flight limit from eight to 10 hours, a move not supported by research by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration that purportedly forms the basis for the rule.

The Teamsters and several unaffiliated unions have also asked the FAA for rules that would restrict flying during normal sleep hours, set "reasonable limits" on maximum duty time and provide "sensible" rest periods.

- The AFA has joined Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) in supporting the Aviation Clean Air Act, which would require regulations governing cabin air quality in commercial aircraft. "Flight attendants should not be forced to work in an often unhealthy environment day in and day out," said Friend, who turned to Congress after the Federal Aviation Administration failed to act.
- Although ValuJet's fleet has been grounded for safety reasons, employees recall horrendous working conditions at the virulently anti-union carrier. At a June 12 town hall meeting in Atlanta sponsored by the AFL-CIO, Susan Clayton, president of the Flight Attendants local at ValuJet, described working conditions that included dismissals without explanation, 24-hour shifts and forced work through illnesses. "This is America in 1996, and this is still happening?" she asked.

— David Kameras

Avis workers seek share of proceeds from stock sale

The employee owners of Avis are demanding that the proposed $800 million sale of the company to HFS Inc. benefit them as well as corporate executives.

The key demands, contained in letters to the ESOP committee and ESOP trustee, are that workers receive the proceeds from the sale of unallocated shares being held in trust for them. Workers also want assurances that they will not lose their jobs under the merger.

As the purchase loan is paid down, the ESOP trustee allocates shares annually to individual employee ESOP accounts. About half, or 12 million, of the ESOP shares still are being held in trust for the employees, pending allocation.

"This sale is a pig in a poke to us," said Avis service agent Sharon Smouse of Orlando, Fla., a member of the Avis Employee Owners Association. "Without our unallocated shares, we will get only half our due. Management is watching out for itself; we have to watch out for ourselves."

Corporate officials have said some of the money from the sale of unallocated shares may be used to help retire $1 billion in corporate debt. The employees, who cash in their shares at retirement, claim the unallocated shares are worth about $288 million at current stock prices.

The structure of Avis gives lie to the idea of employee ownership. The ESOP committee is appointed by the board of directors.

The workers have no say in who sits on the board, and they have no way of knowing if the trustee, who is named by the committee, is acting in their best interest.

Some 3,200 of the employees are represented by the Teamsters.

The employees also are demanding that an independent outside investment banker be hired to determine whether the buyout price is fair, as well as full disclosure of the buyout terms.

They also want the company to instruct the trustee to vote unallocated shares in the same proportion as employees vote their shares on the proposed buyout.

NEWSMAKERS

AWARDS

One hundred and eight students representing 38 AFL-CIO unions received a total of $152,000 in Union MasterCard scholarship awards. The scholarship recipients were chosen from a pool of nearly 10,000 applicants and received awards ranging from $4,000 to $500.

Among the program's top four-year college and university award recipients is **Phuong Tang**, whose parents are members of the Service Employees. Tang came to the United States from Vietnam after spending several years in a refugee camp. She was chosen for a $4,000 award based partly on her essay that recounted her parents' experience of picketing by day the buildings they "spotlessly cleaned each night" as part of SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaign.

Carrie Narvaiz, of Columbia, Tenn., is returning to school with a family and numerous outside responsibilities. The spouse of Angelo Narvaiz of the Roofers, Carrie is studying computer information systems at Columbia State Community College, with the help of a $1,000 scholarship.

Another outstanding award recipient is **Randy Siemers** of Billings, Mont., a Laborers organizer. Siemers, who mobilized the community to pass a resolution against hate crimes, will use a $500 award to pursue a degree in labor studies through a joint program involving the George Meany Center for Labor Studies and Antioch University.

Florida AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer **Anthony C. Hill** was honored as the "Most Valuable State Legislator" by the Florida Democratic Black Caucus. The award is based on legislators' relationships with their constituents. Hill represents the 14th district in the state House of Representatives.

DEATH

Fred Anderson, an Emmy award-winning news broadcaster and longtime officer of the Television and Radio Artists, died in California. He was 59.

Anderson joined KABC-TV in Los Angeles in 1969 as a charter member of its Eyewitness News team, specializing in human interest features. He also hosted a series called Good News during the 1980s.

Anderson was elected AFTRA's recording secretary in 1988 and served on the union's national board.

CORRECTION

Lillian Roehl is retiring from the AFL-CIO after 50 years of service. Roehl began her career in the CIO regional office in 1945, and became the receptionist at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies when it opened in 1974. She retired as the secretary for the center's deputy director and coordinator of the visual arts program.

John Jackson, a striking Detroit newspaper worker and Graphic Communications pressman, was incorrectly identified in a photo caption in the July 1 issue.

RESOURCES

Materials to help spread the word that America Needs A Raise are available from the AFL-CIO.

A facts and figures handout in English or Spanish costs $5 per 100; VHS video highlights are $8 each and an ad slick (one per order) is free; T-shirts are $12, each; buttons $26 per 100; lapel stickers $22 per roll of 500; bumper stickers $35 per 100; and balloons $18 per 100. They may be ordered from the AFL-CIO, PMO, Room 209, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Buyers should send their name, organization, local number, street address, city, state, ZIP code, phone and FAX numbers along with a check or money order made payable to the AFL-CIO. District of Columbia residents only need to add 5.75 percent sales tax.

CONFERENCES

The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance will hold its first national conference on organizing Asian Pacific American workers Aug. 2-4 in San Diego. Contact APALA at 202/842-1263.

The Child Labor Coalition's **Conference on Domestic and International Child Labor** will be held Sept. 8-10 at the Embassy Row Hotel in Washington. Contact David Razon at the National Consumers League, 202/835-3323.



Several dozen affiliates and the AFL-CIO have created home pages on the Internet's World Wide Web, bringing instant worldwide communication to the users as well as aiding union research and organizing.

Cyberspace@boontoaflcio.unions

By Mike Hall

The AFL-CIO and several dozen affiliated unions, local unions and various pro-labor groups are finding new electronic homes in cyberspace.

The Internet has helped the Service Employees, California State Employees Association arm itself in a fight over privatizing the state's prisons. And an E-mail address for Machinists Local 282 in Bremerton, Wash., put an 800-person Montana machine shop on the organizing list.

In the past few months alone, the number of visitors to the AFL-CIO's home page jumped dramatically, from an average of about 250 a week to 1,700 a week, with more than 70,000 "hits" since its debut in September 1995.

The recent upswing in visitors can be attributed to the federation's rising profile in the news, explained Blair Calton, the AFL-CIO's cyberspace gatekeeper.

"We've gotten a lot of hits from the public, the press," he said. "And in the spring, when the minimum wage ads hit the air, it really jumped."

Unlike LaborNET, a service available on CompuServe with more than 3,000 union subscribers, the AFL-CIO's home page on the Internet's World Wide Web is open to anybody with a computer and a modem. Like many web sites, the AFL-CIO's and those of other unions are developing and changing as organizations define and refine what they hope to accomplish with this rapidly evolving end-of-the-century technology.

The AFL-CIO web page now is a huge bulletin board and resource storehouse for union members and the public. If you clicked on http://aflcio.org at the end of June, you would find the complete current edition of the AFL-CIO News (including this story), federation policy statements, issue papers, press releases and congressional testimony.

You can get the latest news from the AFL-CIO's historic Union Summer program or make a visit to the Organizing Institute. You can find out what not to buy by calling up the boycott list. You can ask a question or leave a message.

Calton said he has been getting about 100 visitors' messages a week, ranging from health and safety, to organizing and other workplace inquiries, which he refers to the appropriate offices. There's also a plethora of right-wing, anti-labor diatribes against the AFL-CIO's growing political presence.

The federation site provides "links" to some two dozen other union and labor-oriented sites. You simply go down the list and select the union you want to visit, and off you go. If you can't find what you want there, several Internet search programs are available on line to get you where you want to go.

"In the beginning, it's a way to supplement our communication effort. But later on, it could be the primary way we communicate," said Drew Mendelson, CSEA senior communication specialist.

"A lot more of our members are on line than we expected, and that's pretty exciting," said Nancy Brigham, the "webmaster" of the UAW's home page.

Along with providing a two-way communication with members, the Internet has been quite useful to unions in other ways.

"Local union editors are telling me that they download stuff that they find of interest and post it, pass it out or put it in their papers," Brigham said. "That means we're getting immediate information out to the membership."

In the California prison privatization fight, Mendelson used the Internet to explore the extent of involvement by Wackenhut. He found some 7,000 references to the company.

There was congressional testimony by and about the huge security company, stories about their efforts to crack down on Alaska pipeline whistle-blowers, failed attempts at privatizing some Canadian prisons and megabytes of financial information. Mendelson said it was a great help in turning back the privatization effort.

"Surfing the net" proved handy in a recent lead exposure arbitration case handled by Rick Brown, president of IAM Local 282 (District 160) in the Puget Sound, Wash., area.

"I was lost. I didn't know where to go," he said. "So I popped up on the Internet, wrote in lead exposure and got back NIOSH (the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) and some university. They sent me a ton of stuff on lead exposure. I can't say it won the case for me, but it sure helped."

Brown said the local, which had long had an E-mail address, developed their home page after "we got a long E-mail from this fellow in Montana about an 800-person shop he wanted to organize." An easy-to-find web site telling visitors about the union could help in organizing, the local figured. The page includes information on "How to Be a Member" and gives the names and phone numbers to call for private-sector or federal-sector organizing.

"We want to let everybody know we are the Machinists," Brown said. "We want to showcase ourselves and highlight the positive side of unions."

Another advantage "of having our own home page is that we get our message out to the public undiluted by the media," said Kent Darr, Ohio AFL-CIO communications director.

Up since last September, it's "primarily used as a way to post information, say, on legislation. If we need a letter-writing campaign and if the (politician's) office has E-mail, we can zap it right there," Darr said.

Many of the pages will directly send an electronic letter to your senators, House members, state legislators or governors. Some even provide the letter and all you have do is click on your lawmaker's name and off it goes.

The Postal Workers' Philadelphia area local, one of its largest, has had a web site since last November.

"We've got a lot of resources other locals can use," said Ed Doherty, the local's president. "They can download files with software we use to keep track of grievances or use us to link to other government resources or health and safety sites."

UAW gets Saturn to change tires

Steelworkers campaign observes 'Days of Rage'

By James B. Parks

The UAW and GM Saturn have agreed to allow customers of new Saturns to replace, at the automaker's expense, any Firestone tires with a union-made brand.

That "major breakthrough" in the Steelworkers campaign against the renegade Bridgestone/Firestone was announced by USWA President George Becker as workers around the world prepared to mark the second anniversary of the strike against the company with two "Days of Rage," a massive show of global solidarity.

The union also warned the tiremaker that Saturn may drop Firestone as its exclusive tire when contracts expire in 1997.

"Saturn is a worker-operated facility in which the union has a great say in purchasing philosophy and decisions," Becker said in a July 1 press conference at AFL-CIO headquarters. "It would appear the Saturn dealers will wind up with a lot of Bridgestone/Firestone tires in back."

Rallies were held July 12-13 in several European and South American countries where Bridgestone plants are located, and in Tokyo, the company's world headquarters.

"Many overseas unions pledged their support to the Steelworkers, and they will continue to stand with us until all our workers are back on the job with a decent contract," said USWA Executive Vice President John Sellers.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney and Becker joined more than 1,000 union members and supporters and a contingent of Union Summer activists for a mass "Days of Rage" rally and concert in Nashville July 13. The rally capped two days of activity in Nashville, the U.S. headquarters of the Japanese tiremaker.

The day before, USWA members rallied at the Camp Justice encampment within sight of Bridgestone headquarters, then marched on the company's offices.

On July 13, more than 1,000 activists, including Union Summer participants, handbilled customers at 14 Nashville-area MasterCare auto service centers, owned by Firestone, to enlist their support for the "don't buy" campaign. Around the country, union members handbilled at 1,200 MasterCare centers.

The 10 Union Summer activists, in town since June 24, have handbilled the Nashville MasterCare centers daily. "If we're able to raise just a little bit of community consciousness to the plight of families in Bridgestone/Firestone cities who remain out of work, then we'll have done our jobs," said Joe Geevarghese, a USWA organizer and 1995 graduate of Vanderbilt University who is coordinating the Nashville Union Summer activities.

In addition to the rallies, the USWA ran a 30-minute TV program in 20 cities July 13 exposing the activities of the company Becker calls "a poster child for corporate irresponsibility."

The USWA and Bridgestone/Firestone have been unable to reach agreement on a contract since July 1994, when 4,000 workers walked off the job. The workers, formerly members of the Rubber Workers, suspended the strike after 10 months. During the strike, Bridgestone/Firestone hired 2,300 replacement workers. At issue is the rehiring of 700 strikers.

The USWA is attacking the company on many fronts in its effort to gain a new contract. The USWA "will continue to escalate this campaign until all workers are reinstated with a decent contract and back pay and until Bridgestone stops illegally firing workers," Sellers said. "We will continue to make Bridgestone feel the heat throughout this long, hot summer."

The National Labor Relations Board will hold hearings beginning Oct. 15 on a number of unfair labor practice complaints against the company, including illegally replacing striking workers.

Some 500 USWA members dropped the "Black Flag," on Bridgestone/Firestone at the Cleveland Medic Drug Grand Prix over the June 29-30 weekend. The black flag is the traditional racing symbol for disqualifying a car for outrageous rules violations.

The USWA's "black flag" campaign is asking consumers not to buy Bridgestone/Firestone products or services, such as tires, golfing equipment, sporting goods or auto repairs at MasterCare centers around the country, until all workers are returned to work with back wages and a fair contract is negotiated.

The union also refuted the company's claim that shutting down its U.S. plants on July 4 proves it has not taken away patriotic holidays, as the USWA claims.

"This year, when Bridgestone/Firestone workers enjoy July 4 away from their jobs, it will not be because that holiday is guaranteed in their contract. It will be only because the company decided to close the plants for maintenance," Sellers said.

Detroit strikers get international help

One year after workers struck the Detroit newspapers, union solidarity has extended across the nation and around the globe.

The Geneva-based Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International has urged its 223 affiliated unions to support the AFL-CIO's "don't buy, don't advertise" campaign against USA TODAY, the flagship newspaper of Gannett Corp., owner of the Detroit News. The organization represents some 4.6 million telecommunications and postal workers in 117 countries.

PTTI General Secretary Phillip Bowyer announced June 27 that the federation was directing its affiliates to promote the campaign among union families and the traveling public, and also to discourage businesses from advertising in or circulating the paper. USA TODAY publishes European and Asian editions that are sold and frequently offered free by hotels and airlines.

Some 2,000 employees of the News and Free Press, owned by Knight-Ridder, have been on strike since July 13, 1995, after negotiations failed to produce a new agreement. Management and scabs imported from other papers are producing the newspapers.

The extent of the newspapers' hypocrisy was displayed during National Labor Relations Board hearings June 26, when Gannett's chief labor attorney, John Jaske, objected to the introduction of stories from his own newspaper and the Free Press showing the two companies' intent to permanently replace striking workers.

"With all due respect, we can't assume that what is printed in the newspapers is true," Jaske told a chuckling NLRB Administrative Law Judge Thomas Wilks, who overruled his objection.

The regional NLRB administrator has declared the strike an unfair labor practice strike. If Wilks upholds that ruling, the hiring of replacements would be illegal.

Even if Jaske wouldn't admit the newspapers planned to replace workers, another top manager spilled the beans. In an address to the Society of Human Resources Conference, Randi Austin, vice president for human resources, said the Detroit Newspapers Association conceived a contingency plan to keep the two papers running almost a year before the union contracts expired. DNI runs the business operations for both papers under a joint operating agreement.

In Georgia, about 150 union workers stormed into Knight-Ridder's Macon Telegraph June 24 chanting support for their Detroit colleagues. After being forced out of the building, they continued their chants. "We will take on Knight-Ridder and any other company which attempts to trample on workers' rights," said Stewart Acuff, president of the Atlanta AFL-CIO, who was arrested during the demonstration.

Activists from the AFL-CIO Union Summer campaign joined the strikers and handbilled advertisers still using the struck newspapers. One advertiser who is no longer using the papers is Rick Berman, owner of a Detroit-area furniture store. Berman demanded and received a $2,846 refund after two sets of preprinted inserts failed to generate a single customer response and after the appearance of a third was ruined by water-logged printing presses.

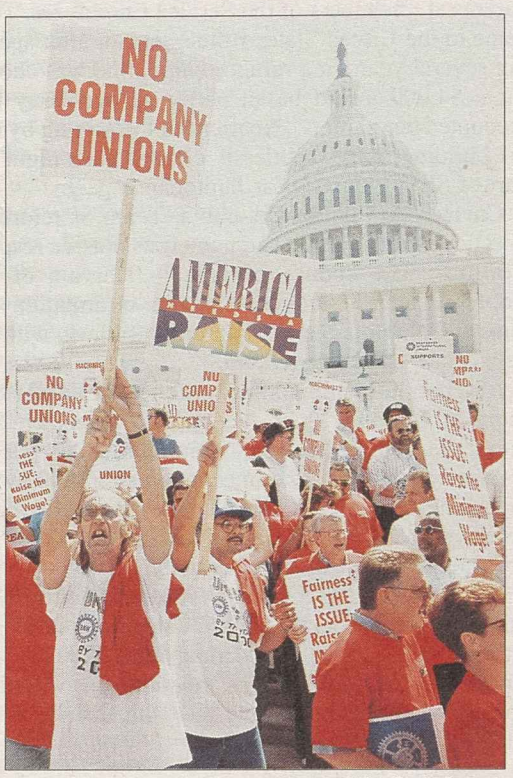
Because of low circulation, Berman said, the newspapers are stuck with large numbers of excess preprinted advertising inserts. To dispose of them, managers are placing them in newspapers bound for neighborhoods that advertisers haven't requested and don't want to pay for.

— James B. Parks

AFL-CIO NEWS

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INSIDE



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Worker mobilization was key in passage of a bill to raise the minimum wage and in making sure the Senate can sustain a veto of the so-called TEAM Act. **See stories, Page 1.**

UNION NEWS

1 *Olympic Games gold for workers*

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Central labor councils gather to plan for labor's revival. **See story, Page 5.**

Grass-roots mobilization in high gear

Unions not intimidated by Republican threats

By Michael Byrne and Mike Hall

With Republican congressional leaders flailing wildly at unions in the final days before recess, the AFL-CIO was keeping the pressure on with advertising on worker issues while preparing to move into an intensive get-out-the-vote phase of Labor '96.

More than 100 trained coordinators were directing grass-roots activity in congressional districts across the country, and many were planning recess activity. They were backed by a new round of television and radio ads on pension security that will replace or augment ads showing House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) describing Republican plans to let Medicare "wither on the vine."

On the ground, the federation's unprecedented member mobilization campaign already has enlisted 3,000 rank-and-file unionists to assist the electoral push, with a goal of training 10,000 union members this year. They will be part of the permanent grass-roots network of at least 100 activists in each congressional district.

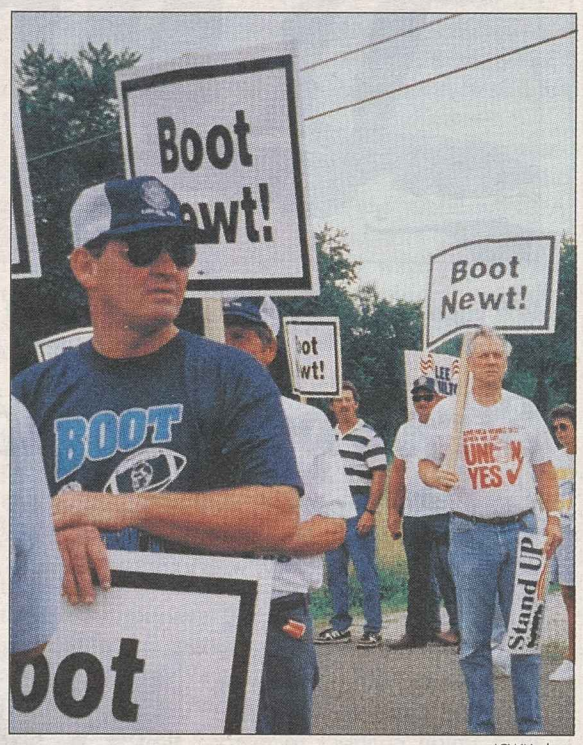
The campaign, subtitled "Building to Win, Building to Last," will enable the federation to "support men and women who will respond to the needs of working families, and then hold those candidates accountable once they are elected," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

Thus far, the AFL-CIO campaign to highlight attacks on working families and publicize those voting records has "hit some raw nerves," Sweeney said. "The depths to which they are going is just unbelievable."

Through threats of legal action and federal investigations, Republican leaders have tried to strong-arm television and radio stations into blocking the federation's issues advertisements, which have focused on opposition to raising the minimum wage and efforts to cut Medicare and give tax cuts to the rich. Only a handful of stations have yielded to the pressure.

The attacks on unions have taken a shrill, almost hysterical tone. In a scene reminiscent of the 1950s McCarthy-era communist witch hunt, Republicans on

Continued on Page 3



ICWU photo

A trip by Newt Gingrich to an anti-union plant in New Albany, Ind., brought 200 Chemical Workers out to protest – one of a growing number of grass-roots events staged by workers.

Rail workers get historic agreements

By David Kameras

Conrail last week finally relented in its bilateral dispute with the Maintenance of Way Employees, ending a two-year struggle to achieve labor agreements between rail labor and the nation's major freight carriers.

With tentative agreements with 13 unions now in place, the national rail industry has survived a bargaining process without strikes or imposed settlements for the first time in at least 30 years.

"BMWE members asked for real wage increases, better working conditions, increased away-from-home expenses and job protection," union President Mac A. Fleming said. "I am pleased that we were able to deliver on all those goals through negotiations and without any service disruption."

The prospect of a disruption was imminent. BMWE had reached agreement with the 34 other railroads belonging to the National Carriers Conference Committee, but Conrail stood alone and intransigent, even after BMWE and the Transportation Communications Union extended a no-strike pledge for seven days beyond the July 23 expiration of a 30-day cooling-off period imposed under the Railway Labor Act.

TCU later settled with all the carriers. The BMWE pact was reached less than 24 hours before the end of the time extension.

The BMWE conflict stemmed from proposals by a presidential emergency board regarding "work force stabilization," affecting workers who are furloughed or reassigned. Conrail maintained that its interpretation of the proposals differed from that of the union's,

Continued on Page 7

Southern bus tour links civil rights, economic justice

By Muriel H. Cooper
Mobile, Ala.

The link between the civil rights movement and the struggle for economic justice took on a human face for 30 Union Summer activists who traveled throughout the South helping to organize nursing home workers, one of the nation's most dangerous and poorly paid professions.

The three-week Southern bus tour is a part of the AFL-CIO's Union Summer campaign deploying 1,500 students and young activists across the country to work in union organizing drives.

Unlike the rest of Union Summer, where activists were assigned to work in one city, the bus tour is traveling more than 850 miles from July 24 to Aug. 11, beginning in Memphis, Tenn. It was stopping in Jackson, Miss., and Mobile, Selma, Montgomery and Birmingham, Ala., before ending up back in Memphis.

The tour is retracing some of the paths taken 30 years ago by an earlier generation of young activists during Freedom Summer, which served as the model for Union Summer.

"You are launching a new movement . . . a movement that connects the struggles of the past for civil rights with the hopes for a future with economic justice," Food and Commercial Workers President Douglas H. Dority told the activists as they gathered

Continued on Page 11



David Rae Morris/Impact Visuals

Vanessa Scott, a nursing home worker, rode along with Union Summer activists during the Southern bus tour.

ORGANIZING

Lights on at Sylvania

The Electronic Workers were able to break a 40-year union drought when workers at the Osram Sylvania facility in St. Marys, Pa., voted 251-227 for IUE representation.

The workers decided they'd had enough of the company's shenanigans after Sylvania tried to implement continuous shifts and permanently laid off 100 workers, sending their jobs to Mexico.

The union effort was pushed by defunct Local 291 workers who worked in Sylvania's Salem, Mass., plant until about four years ago, when the company closed the plant to consolidate with the St. Marys facility.

IUE used more than 50 radio commercials and a full-page newspaper ad explaining what was at stake for the workers and the community. The victory is being pegged as one of the biggest for the union in recent years.

IUE rolls the bumpers on

American Roll Form and Manufacturing Co. in Angola, Ind., granted IUE recognition for 206 workers after 124 signed authorization cards.

Another 77 probationary workers will be part of the unit when they become permanently employed. The workers make auto bumpers.

SEIU scores seven times

The Service Employees scored seven organizing wins in the past few weeks, gaining about 575 new members.

Three of the wins came in health care facilities. SEIU Local 4 won an election July 11 to represent 85 workers at the St. Paul nursing home in Chicago. Local 79 won a July 12 election for a unit of 80 nursing home workers at Friendship Manor in Detroit.

Local 250 survived a vicious anti-union campaign to win a unit of non-professionals at Catholic Healthcare West's St. Joseph's Behavioral Health Center in Stockton, Calif., by a 39-20 margin.

In Chicago, Local 236 signed a contract with a new employer, Argenbright International Services, covering 250 workers at O'Hare International Airport. Two Chicago janitorial units at CHA properties also voted for SEIU by 26-0 and 18-2 votes.

And in Orlando, Fla., SEIU Local 750 won the right to represent workers at National Car Rental on a 38-18 vote.

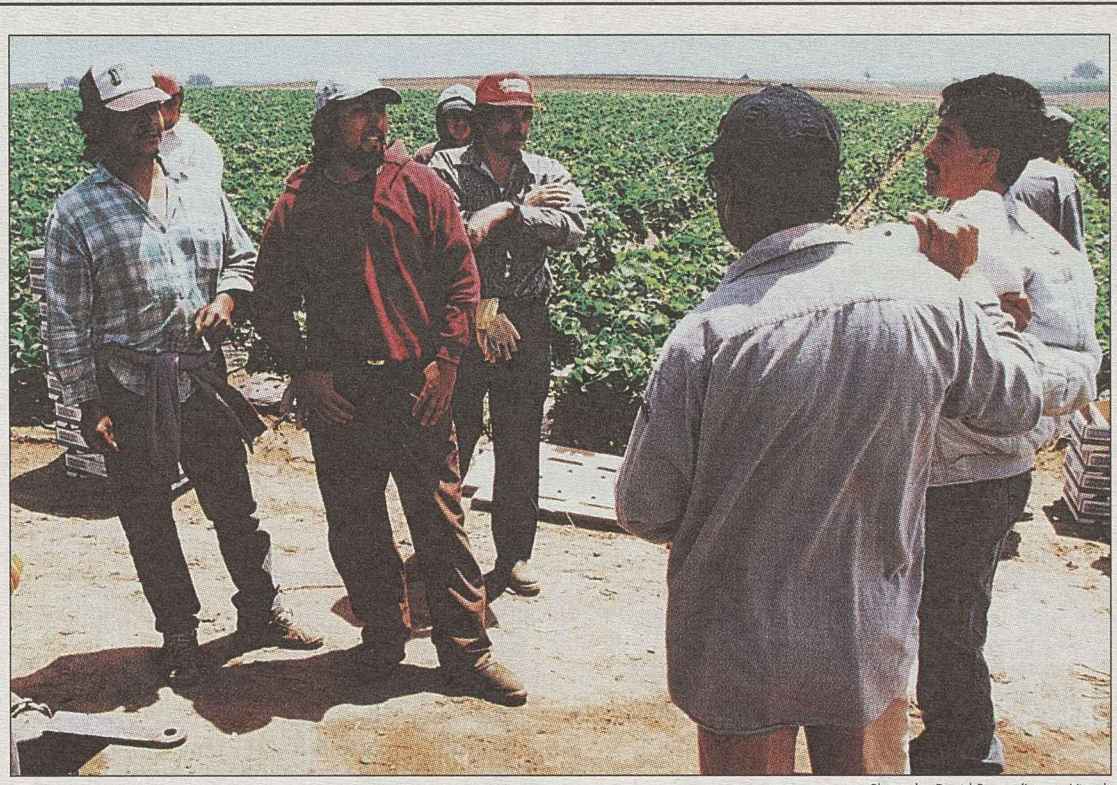
Union wins at Red Cross

Red Cross nurses, professionals and technicians at the South Jersey-Penn Region of American Red Cross Blood Services will be represented by AFT's Hospital Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE).

The unit will include two bargaining units of 300 employees, who voted by a 4-1 margin for the union.

"We fought for our right to be union because we wanted fairness and consistent standards," said Laura Power, a donor collector with the Red Cross. "We intend to use our voice on behalf of employees and the blood donors and patients we serve."

The victory represents a growing trend at Red Cross Blood Services around the country, where 2,000 of the 14,000 workers are now unionized.



Photos by David Bacon/Impact Visuals

UFW organizers Jose Gutierrez and Javier Ortega, at right, talk union with a crew of Gargiulo Co. strawberry pickers in Watsonville, Calif. The two were beaten in June after a similar visit to the company's fields.

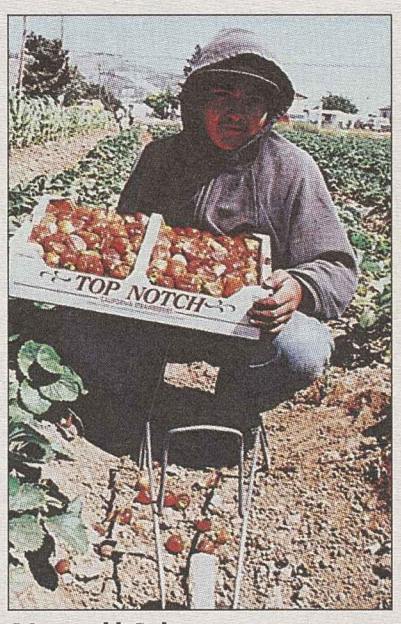
Strawberry fields forever tough

Life is hard for strawberry pickers, who labor 10- to 12-hour work days in California's million-dollar strawberry industry, with exposure to pesticides the order every day.

But there is hope in a union. The Farm Workers have taken on the entire industry to bring the social and economic justice of a union contract to every worker in the fields. The campaign that began last April intensified with pledges from almost 200 AFL-CIO central labor councils during last month's national CLC conference to give their time and resources. **(See story, Page 5).**

Union Summer activists also are assisting the UFW.

"Until the organizing began this year, there had not been a wage increase in 10 years," said UFW President Arturo Rodriguez at the CLC conference. "Pay is among the lowest in agriculture — often below the minimum wage — and most workers have no benefits."



14-year-old Roberto, a recent immigrant, brings in the berries from grower Jaime Rocha's fields.

Fighting back tears, 18-year-old Griselda Ruiz held her daughter as she explained how she was forced to work in the rain, and many times through lunch. "With the campaign, we've seen some changes, because they are trying to look good," she added, "but I was fired for wearing a union button."

Some 20,000 men, women and children work in California's strawberry fields for an average wage of $8,000 per year.

On such paltry salaries, the workers are forced to share small apartments with three or four families, according to the union. Other workers live in caves, shacks and old cars.

Eighty percent of the strawberries consumed in the United States and Canada are grown in California, where the state's Central Coast boasts 65 percent of the total strawberry crop value. The season lasts from March to October.

Some growers already are retaliating against the union. Last June, anti-union workers assaulted two union organizers after they visited workers at Gargiulo Farms in Watsonville. Within hours of the incident, more than 100 farm workers and supporters gathered outside the grower's office to protest the company's anti-union violence and intimidation.

But the power rests with the "coolers," who exert great control over the more than 270 growers.

Coolers provide growers with loans and plants from their nurseries, set the price and package and market growers' crops, according to the UFW.

"Our strategy is to organize the entire strawberry industry — instead of one grower at a time," Rodriguez explained. "That means getting the coolers to cooperate by pressuring growers to do the right thing."

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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LEGISLATION

Veto kills company union bill

Minimum wage, health bills to be signed into law

By Mike Hall

Delivering on his promised veto, President Clinton sent the misnamed TEAM Act to the sidelines July 30. The company union bill had been high on the Republican leadership's business agenda.

Two other major victories for labor were assured when Congress settled differences between House and Senate versions of a long-overdue minimum wage increase and a health insurance portability bill. Clinton will sign both measures.

The AFL-CIO-led drive to give America's lowest-paid workers their first raise in seven years will boost the minimum wage from $4.25 per hour to $5.15 in two 45-cent steps, Oct. 1, 1996, and Oct. 1, 1997.

The House and Senate also put finishing touches on welfare reform legislation opposed by the AFL-CIO. Clinton said he would sign the bill.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney commended Clinton for his veto of the TEAM Act, a "damaging and unnecessary piece of legislation (that) would have given management the say-so over who speaks for workers on issues such as wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment."

In his veto message, Clinton noted the bill would have allowed "employers to establish company unions where no union currently exists and permitted company-dominated unions where employees are in the process of determining whether to be represented by a union."

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) said the measure was unneeded because 30,000 employers already have established worker teams, and the National Labor Relations Board rarely objects to these arrangements.

The bill passed the Senate July 10 by a margin of 53-46. The House passed it 221-202 last September. Neither margin approaches the two-thirds needed in each house to override a presidential veto.

Labor's fight against the TEAM Act in the Senate was two-pronged, with rank-and-file members rallying back home and calling their representatives on the AFL-CIO's toll-free congressional hotline, and with the federation's top officers and affiliated union presidents scouring the Senate hallways to lobby against the bill.

At the same time, several large business groups staked their legislative success or failure on the TEAM Act, but never were able to gather enough support to come close to veto-proofing the company union bill.

Earlier this session, political observers gave the minimum wage increase almost no chance of passage in a Republican-controlled Congress where some party leaders not only vowed to halt an increase but even said the minimum wage should be abolished altogether.

But the AFL-CIO, along with a coalition of progressive organizations, began to drum up massive public support through media campaigns and public events. A series of 29 America Needs A Raise town hall meetings nationwide dramatized the growing wage gap between the rich and the rest of us, as well as obscene executive salaries and soaring corporate profits in a time of layoffs, downsizing and plant shifting.

The health insurance reform bill makes it easier for workers to carry their insurance from job to job and harder for insurance companies to deny coverage for pre-existing conditions, among other reforms. While a good first step, labor will continue to fight for major health care reform.

In the welfare battle, despite some improvements in the bill made in conference, the AFL-CIO urged Clinton to veto the measure. The legislation would end a 61-year-old federal guarantee of cash assistance for families and children by giving annual block grants to states that will set their own rules and regulations for welfare.

The conference did strengthen provisions protecting current and laid-off workers from replacement by welfare recipients, who now will be required to work under the bill's workfare provision. But it does not require a minimum wage or benefit floor, and that greatly intensifies competition in the low-wage labor market.

Worker messages override GOP noise

Continued from Page 1

July 24 staged a phony show hearing on labor, leading in a hooded "secret" witness to testify behind a screen.

The GOP and its allies in the business community, under the guise of a Chamber of Commerce "Coalition," also launched their own ad campaign attacking the AFL-CIO — part of a massive disinformation campaign that includes an eight-minute attack video distributed to media outlets, orchestrated phone bank operations generating negative calls to state and local AFL-CIOs and a constant barrage of anti-union rhetoric from such party leaders as Gingrich and House Majority Leader Richard Armey (R-Texas.)

The AFL-CIO has not backed down, turning many Republican claims on their head while keeping up the drumbeat about how the Gingrich-led Congress has put workers at risk while rewarding rich benefactors. The new TV spots highlight votes last year to allow corporations to spend pension funds, endangering many workers' retirement security.

The Labor '96 push has had a strong economic focus, following on the coast-to-coast "America Needs A Raise" town hall meetings in May and June. That message was explored during July in 22 "kick-off" events in congressional districts, which drew as many as 130 rank-and-file workers in many areas. Participants were asked to join the growing legion of union election workers.

Some 200 district coordinators, union staff and state federation officers will gather Aug. 9-11 at the Masters, Mates and Pilots training center to develop state and district coordinated campaign strategies. That session will effectively launch the electoral phase of Labor '96, which is several months and thousands of union volunteers ahead of what the labor movement has accomplished in past elections.

"We are determined that union members this election will understand the important issues that affect their economic security and living standards," said AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal. "If we do our job, we can reverse the anti-worker tide of the current Congress and make sure workers have a friend in the White House."

The federation also held its first-ever "candidates forum" in Washington, introducing 75 congressional candidates and campaign managers to AFL-CIO unions and their fight for working families. Candidates also heard reports from pollsters on union members' views on crucial issues, and from Karen Nussbaum, director of the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department, on the importance of the women's vote in 1996.

Candidates are listening because the AFL-CIO's message for working families is resonating across the country. The federation's Medicare ads were greeted enthusiastically by labor's allies in Congress, including Minority Whip David E. Bonior (D-Mich.), who organized a series of floor speeches by Democrats defending the ads and lambasting Gingrich.

Embarrassed by the ads, Republicans sought to backpedal, claiming that Gingrich actually was talking about the obscure Health Care Finance Administration.

But Gingrich's words are clear. "But we believe it's going to wither on the vine because we think people are voluntarily going to leave it — voluntarily," he said.

"People could not 'leave' the financing administration as they could 'leave' the traditional Medicare program," AFL-CIO General Counsel Jon Hiatt wrote TV stations, claiming that the Republican objections were "groundless and deceptive."

He also noted that after the Oct. 24, 1995, speech, Gingrich press aide Tony Blankley confirmed the speaker was talking about fee-for-service Medicare.

The two-day House show trial in front of the Judiciary's crime subcommittee also left egg on the face of the GOP. The hearings were designed to attack a 1995 agreement between the Laborers and the Justice Department to institute reforms as a "sweetheart" deal, while trying to tie the union to organized crime.

But a former FBI agent and a Justice Department witness described how LIUNA is working with the government to effectively clean its house, and dismissed accusations of favoritism.

The GOP's mystery witness was unmasked as a paid government informant who had sold information to tabloids.

Sweeney called it a "naked political payback for labor's success in telling it like it is."

CAPITOL DIGEST

The House continued the attack on the 40-hour work week July 30 when it passed a bill allowing employers to replace overtime pay with compensatory time.

But the measure (H.R. 2391) faces a Senate fight, and the Department of Labor has recommended that President Clinton veto it.

Like many Republican initiatives, the bill carries a deceptive, worker-friendly title, "The Working Families Flexibility Act."

The bill "will not give workers increased control over their lives. It will give them a reduced paycheck and standard of living for their families," AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor said.

A recent Peter Hart poll showed that workers, by a 64-22 percent margin, prefer overtime pay to comp time. Backers of the bill tried to paint it as a voluntary arrangement between the boss and workers, but most of the control is in the hands of the employers.

The so-called worker protections in the bill are "weak and virtually meaningless," Taylor said. "The concept of a 'voluntary arrangement' in most workplaces is a cruel hoax. If the employer wants to 'pay' for overtime work in compensatory time, not cash, the employer will find a way to exert his considerable influence over the workers to accept that arrangement."

Proponents of the legislation claim it would give workers a chance to use their comp time for various family functions and other needs at the workers' discretion. But the bill essentially gives the boss veto power over the workers' use of earned comp time.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

Elsewhere in Congress:

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM — What do you call a bill that lets rich fat cats give even more big political donations, halves what worker-financed political action committees can give and attacks unions, too? If you're Newt Gingrich, you call it "campaign finance reform." But this bill was so out-rageously weighted to the wealthy it fell 259-162. It also would have imposed a bureaucratic nightmare of regulations on unions' political activity.

DAVIS-BACON — The Senate was expected to turn back what one labor lobbyist called one of the "most venal and mean-spirited" amendments he had seen — a move to suspend the Davis-Bacon Act for reconstruction of the Oklahoma City federal building. On April 19, 1995, an explosion there killed 168 workers, and in the hours, days and weeks following, building and construction trade workers toiled tirelessly and sometimes voluntarily to save survivors, remove victims and stabilize the destroyed building. Oklahoma BCTD Secretary Jimmy Fish called the move "a slap in the face to the hundreds of skilled construction men and women who worked so admirably in the aftermath of the blast."

MANDATES — A move that could have undermined such basic labor laws as the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Davis-Bacon Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act, along with core environmental laws, was defeated July 23. The federal Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations voted down its own final report on so-called unfunded mandates, thanks to pressure from organized labor, the environmental community and the Clinton administration. The ACIR had been charged with reporting recommendations under unfunded mandate legislation passed in 1995. A White House letter outlining objections to the report said it ignored "the views of working men and women who benefit from these laws."

PESTICIDES — A fight started with a 1989 AFL-CIO lawsuit to ban the use on fresh foods of pesticides suspected of causing cancer is coming to a successful end. Already, such agents are banned from processed foods, but a House-passed bill would apply uniform standards to fresh and processed foods. It also creates higher standards for certain foods and chemicals that affect children and calls for screening for chemicals that raise the risk of breast cancer.

— Mike Hall

JOB SAFETY

Teens limited on machines

The Senate has approved a narrowly worded measure to allow teen-agers to load cardboard paper balers in retail establishments meeting certain industry standards.

The House passed a similar measure last October. While 16- and 17-year-old workers will be allowed to load the machines, they may not operate or unload them. In addition, the Senate measure calls for stepped-up reporting of accidents involving teens and the machines, with Congress retaining the ability to modify the law if injuries increase.

Lockout/tagout challenge

A federal appeals court has ruled that a warning of machine start-up invalidates OSHA's lockout/tagout rule regarding "unexpected" activation.

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a decision by the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission vacating citations against General Motors Corp., rejecting the Department of Labor's interpretation that "unexpected" meant "unanticipated" or "unplanned for." The court said "unexpected" contained an element of surprise that would be lacking if a worker had advance notice of start-up.

OSHA may appeal the ruling or might have to reissue the rule to change its wording to conform with the court's language.

Michael Wright, director of health and safety for the Steelworkers, said of the ruling that reliance on warning signals eliminates the necessary margin of safety for workers, citing as an example the possibility of alarm failure or a worker's inability to hear an alarm because of a noisy workplace.

Silica dangers targeted

OSHA announced plans for a nationwide effort to begin this month to protect workers from exposure to crystalline silica dust through stepped-up training, education and outreach programs.

The special emphasis program — a collaboration of labor, government and business — seeks to aid workers in maritime, agriculture, construction and general industry. Workers performing sandblasting, drilling or tunneling are especially at risk.

Nearly 14,000 deaths were attributed to exposure to the dust from 1958 to 1990, while 300 more people die each year from silicosis. Inhaling silica dust also has been associated with other diseases, such as tuberculosis and lung cancer. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health estimates some 2 million workers are exposed annually.

Lead violator fined

A Michigan demolition contractor faces a $742,000 fine for numerous alleged willful and serious violations of OSHA regulations protecting construction workers against overexposure to lead.

The exposures occurred during demolition at a Trinidad, Texas, power plant last fall, when 25 of 30 workers were found to have blood lead levels above the OSHA threshold for medical attention. Eight of those 30 had levels requiring removal from the work site; one required extensive treatment.

Crackdown on egg farm

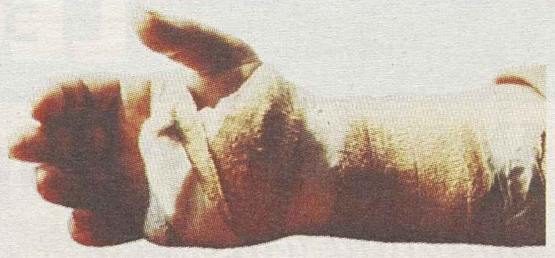
DeCoster Egg Farms faces $3.6 million in proposed penalties levied by the U.S. Department of Labor for safety and health violations — and criminal charges are being considered.

DeCoster employs 800 workers in three states.

Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich said the company operates an "unsanitary and dangerous workplace," provides "inhumane living quarters" of cramped trailers and treats workers deplorably — as in the case of a worker who severed several fingers and was forced to wait hours for medical aid.

OSHA cited unguarded machinery, violations of housing requirements for temporary labor camps, exposed electrical parts and ungrounded equipment, overexposure to air contaminants, failure to provide protective equipment, noise overexposure, lack of medical care and lack of hazard communication training.

Ergonomic work is spared cuts



Ban lifted on protections against workplace crippler

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Working families scored another big safety and health victory when the House voted to repeal a ban on the development of a standard addressing repetitive stress injuries.

By a 216-205 vote, the House July 11 deleted language that denied the Occupational Safety and Health Administration the ability to develop an ergonomics standard — or, indeed to even gather information on ergonomic-related hazards.

Workers and their allies pushed hard on Capitol Hill to get the language removed from the Labor/Education/Health and Human Services appropriations measure, and were rewarded for their efforts when 35 Republicans joined 180 Democrats and one independent in voting against the provision.

"We were surprised at the vote, given the history on this issue," said Peg Seminario, the federation's job safety and health director, "but there's been a swing of opinion away from the extreme Republican proposals they've been putting forward in the past."

Simply put, ergonomics considers the fit of the job to the anatomy of the worker. Hazards include repetitive motion, awkward positions and heavy and awkward lifting. With poor job design or poorly designed equipment, the increased stress on workers' bodies often leads to injury.

Workers know too well the toll of jobsite ergonomic hazards. Over the past decade, the numbers and rates of disorders associated with repeated trauma have increased by epidemic proportions — more than 800 percent. In fact, in 1994, more than 705,000 workers suffered serious injuries related to ergonomic hazards.

Workers at highest risk for injury and illness labor in meat processing plants, nursing homes and hospitals, at keyboards, on assembly lines and in grocery stores.

The economic costs of these disorders are huge, with workers' compensation and other related costs associated with the crippling injuries estimated at more than $20 billion a year.

For example, workers with carpal tunnel syndrome lose a median of 30 days of work annually, compared with a median of five days lost for all injuries. By comparison, amputations — well recognized as serious injuries — result in an average of 24 days away from work.

GOP Rep. Henry Bonilla of Texas championed the restrictive language, employing an ostrich-like approach to the sprains, strains and crippling effects of RSI suffered by thousands of workers. His measure took the approach that if an injury is not reported, it didn't happen — so if you ban the reporting of injuries, they don't exist, and therefore no standard is required to deal with them.

Bonilla blamed "the strong arm of labor" for his provision's defeat, and Republicans vowed to bring the measure up again.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) led the effort against Bonilla's amendment.

"I want to thank the 216 members of Congress who put the health and safety of American workers ahead of partisan politics," said Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich. "If injuries are occurring in the workplace, it's up to the Labor Department to find a way to prevent them. That's our job."

Even while workers rejoiced at turning back the ergonomic language, there was a downside to the appropriations measure.

Funding was cut for OSHA and Mine Safety and Health Administration programs, specifically in enforcement. The House bill also failed to provide funds for important mine safety and health research activities signed over to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health with the demise last year of the Bureau of Mines.

In addition, the House approved an amendment banning the use of any Social Security or Medicare Trust Fund money to pay Social Security Administration workers who perform legitimate union activities during work hours. These workers, somewhat like shop stewards, comprise less than 0.3 percent of the SSA's work force, and have been performing these "official time" duties for decades.

When the bill goes to the Senate in September, activists should contact their senators (1/800-LABOR21) to urge them to oppose restrictive ergonomic language, restore funding to federal job safety agencies and programs and remove the SSA provision.

IBEW: Utility deregulation would shock

By David Kameras

Federal legislation introduced by a Colorado congressman to impose restructuring and deregulation on electric utilities would threaten American jobs and communities, the Electrical Workers say.

"Proponents of this bill are using words like 'choice,' 'cost savings' or 'elimination of restrictions' in describing its provisions," said IBEW President John J. Barry. "We believe that, despite the good intentions of some of its backers, the bill as it stands would cause chaos and disruption in an industry already undergoing massive changes.

"The hard fact of the matter is that every American has a stake in the outcome of this issue," he said. "Electricity is vital to the security and the very functioning of our country. We believe that all members of Congress and indeed every concerned citizen must engage in a full and vigorous debate before anything affecting such a vital service is adopted."

The measure was put forth by Rep. Dan Schaefer (R-Colo.).

Barry charged that House members, led by Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), are claiming benefits based on "the rosy but erroneous findings" of a report issued by Citizens for a Sound Economy.

Although the 1992 Energy Policy Act already has opened up the industry to deregulation, new measures like Schaefer's seek to usurp the right of the states to set the pace in introducing competition through their own regulatory authorities.

"Should Washington solve a problem that doesn't exist?" asked an IBEW position paper that notes:

- Threatened retail competition or direct access has caused utility companies to bolster stock prices by slashing their work forces, negatively affecting the lives of thousands of workers and their communities.
- Job loss places a great strain on the reliability of the electric utility system and threatens yet another source of decent, fairly compensated jobs in the United States.
- A scaled-back work force negatively affects the safety and reliability of an electric system that has been the world's best and most affordable to all consumers.
- Small businesses and individual consumers will be in a much weaker position to obtain lower rates if mega-companies dominate a region's power supply, provide deep discount rates to energy-intensive industrial customers and shift costs to remaining consumers.
- Most legislative proposals seek a direct connection between power production and delivery costs and consumer rates, which is largely irrelevant to real costs and benefits and would shift costs to small businesses and individual consumers.

"The need for further radical federal restructuring of the electric utility industry is simply not there," said Barry. "We will do all in our power to convince Congress that oversight of the nation's power supply rightly belongs intrastate, a system that has worked well for everyone in our society for decades."

Barry told his union's utility conference in January of efforts in various states to roll back regulation, much of it prompted by the momentum gathering steam at the federal level, and the struggle of locals to hold the line.

"The trend in utilities towards mergers, job cutting and hard-line bargaining is worldwide," he said. "The proponents of the free market, whose consciences are untroubled by such 'annoyances' as job security, community well-being or social concerns, have turned their attention to utilities.

"We must face up to the forces on the right wing that want to promote rapid and irresponsible change in the utility industry," Barry declared. "They are attempting nothing less than to destabilize the industry for their own gain."



Michael Osborne/Colorado Labor Advocate

In one spirited session, participants at the first national central labor council conference in Denver broke out in impromptu singing of labor songs

Energized central labor councils explore new roles

By Sharolyn A. Rosier
Denver

Walking the walk and talking the talk, 175 central labor council officers attending the first national CLC conference took to the streets to rally for justice in the community.

An impromptu group began singing the song of labor as well, giving voice to "Rise Again," "Solidarity Forever" and other worker standards as the officers took Denver by storm. They shared ideas and recommendations on how they could take that creative energy and become the bedrock of labor's efforts to rise again.

The CLC officers took immediate action on strategic campaigns by participating in a July 12 rally in support of striking Detroit News and Free Press newspaper workers. More than 300 people — including CLC officers, union members and federation staff — rallied in front of Gannett-owned KUSA Channel 9 on the day before the strike's one-year anniversary.

Chanting as they entered the lobby, their noise deafened the panic-stricken station executives, who called the police and reported a "riot." Following an exhortation by Farm Workers President Arturo S. Rodriguez, the demonstrators engaged in informational picketing **(See story, Page 8).**

Back at the conference, the CLC officers also rose to the occasion when Rodriguez and two UFW members who were fired for union activity gave striking accounts of the slave-like conditions of the California strawberry fields. **(See story, Page 2).**

The conferees donated their own money to the campaign and in turn pledged their councils to donate time and resources to the campaign. After working sessions on CLC support for the strawberry campaign, the officers also agreed to organize two national days of action in support of the workers and offered numerous recommendations for the campaign.

Other working sessions focused on the role of the CLC, building membership participation and encouraging legislative and political action. Dialogue during working sessions and question-and-answer periods showed that CLCs are indeed rising again.

Amy Dean, business manager of the South Bay Labor Council in San Jose, Calif., said her council has established a nonprofit organization called Working Partnerships USA and a campaign management institute.

"Community as well as labor leaders need to be at the table as we formulate and fight for all working people," Dean explained. "The labor council set up WPUSA to institutionalize this crucial relationship and to provide a vehicle to reach the widest possible constituency."

In less than a year, WPUSA has become a player in the regional debate over economic development policy, persuading the County Board of Supervisors to approve tax abatement guidelines that protect the rights of working people and taxpayers and provide a guaranteed number of good-paying jobs.

Other councils, including the Omaha (Neb.) Federation of Labor, have formed nonprofit organizations. President Terry Moore agreed that such groups expand labor's organizational and political clout in the community.

The AFL-CIO Department of Field Mobilization sponsored the conference to forge just such innovation.

"There's no one more vital to the labor movement than you are — no one," AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson told the CLC officers. "For our movement to succeed, it needs for you to succeed."

Although the labor movement is in a time of colossal challenges, Chavez-Thompson said, those challenges also provide a window of opportunity — a chance to help set the agenda for the nation.

"But a larger movement is needed," she stressed. "That's why we're aiming to create a culture of organizing throughout the union movement . . . and CLCs can and will be the center of that culture."

Several CLC officers reminded Chavez-Thompson, who oversees state and local AFL-CIO activities, and AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, that building these extensive organizing and political programs at the local level are limited by low levels of local union affiliation and a lack of resources.

Sweeney promised the officers the AFL-CIO would "work harder, spend more money and campaign smarter than we ever have before."

"But the bulk of the resources for reorganizing the American work force and rebuilding the American labor movement must come from international and local unions," he explained, "while the coordination and community support for such efforts must come from our central labor councils."

"We need to make the work of central labor councils so important and essential that local unions feel it would be foolish not to affiliate," said Marilyn Sneiderman, the federation's field mobilization director. "We must simultaneously activate our councils and increase affiliation of locals so we have the resources that we need to get the job done."

Another key focus of the national conference was coalition-building in the community. In adopting a new slogan, "Organizing for Justice in the Community," conference attendees spent many hours in workshops and plenary sessions developing strategies about how best to build progressive networks back home.

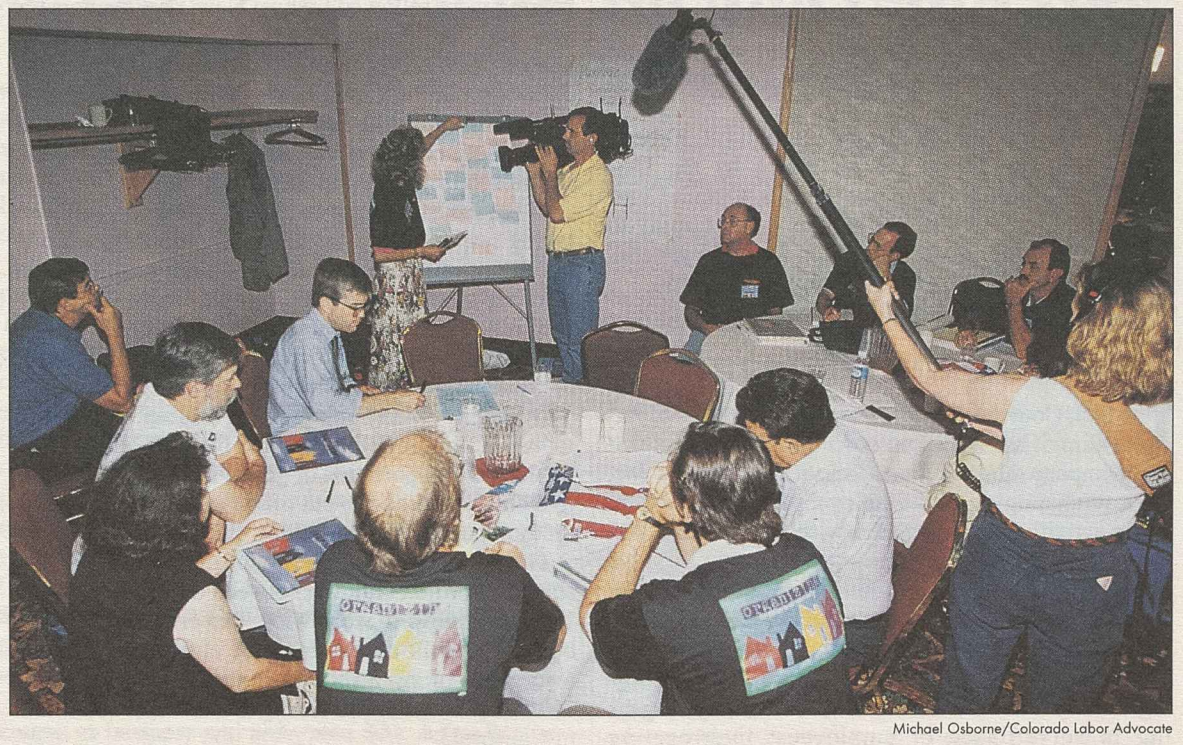
Radio commentator Jim Hightower praised labor as "the force that rallies people whether they are union or not. That's what this is all about."

The officers also elected four members to the CLC Advisory Committee from a field of 20 who sought election. They are Jeff Crosby of Lynn, Mass.; Ernie Esposito of Johnstown, Pa. ; Warren Gould of New Haven, Conn.; and Ernie Grecco of Baltimore. Dean was elected to chair the committee.

Formed by Sweeney with the appointment of 20 officers from small, medium and large councils, the committee's charge is to set priorities and the direction for labor councils. As part of their work, every council is being surveyed via telephone, with 320 surveys completed, said Fernando Gapasin of Penn State University.

The AFL-CIO plans to use the work of the Advisory Committee, the conference and the telephone survey to lead the national CLC mobilization effort to unite and magnify the work of each council into one program that offers workers a real opportunity to start fighting back and winning, Sneiderman said.

Other speakers included Sweeney's Executive Assistant Bob Welsh; Arlene Holt, executive assistant to Chavez-Thompson; Richard Bensinger, director of the AFL-CIO Organizing Department; Steve Rosenthal, director of the federation's Political Department; and Peggy Taylor, director of the federation's Legislative Department.



Michael Osborne/Colorado Labor Advocate

Much of the business of the conference was conducted in "how-to" and "what-if" workshops.

COURTS

$20 million award reversed

A federal appeals court has reversed a $20 million lower court damages award against the Carpenters and the Paperworkers.

BE&K, a nonunion construction firm based in Birmingham, Ala., alleged that the unions conspired to have the company removed from a $500 million Potlatch Corp. paper mill construction project in 1991. The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed claims against the UBC because of insufficient evidence, and dismissed a state claim against UPIU because it was pre-empted by a pending federal suit. The case is BE&K Construction vs. Carpenters.

"This is not just a great decision for us," said UBC President Douglas J. McCarron. "The court's ruling also defends the rights of all unions to work together in solidarity."

UPIU President Wayne E. Glenn praised the unanimous appeals court decision, calling the jury finding "unjustified" and the award "outrageous."

BE&K charged that the two unions threatened Potlatch with violence if BE&K was not removed from work on its Cypress Bend mill in McGehee, Ark. The appeals court found that the UBC was not even present at the meeting in question and that UPIU, which represents Cypress Bend workers, did not threaten Potlatch, but had peacefully and legally tried to convince the company to change its mind.

No 'paycheck electioneering'

The National Labor Relations Board unanimously banned companies from using workers' paychecks and the way they are distributed to influence union elections.

Citing its rules against last-minute speechmaking by either side to a "captive audience" and late campaigning near polling places, the board laid down these prohibitions on employers:

- No splitting of paychecks as an anti-union tactic. Some employers would give employees two checks, one containing what the employer says the worker would earn, less union dues, and the other representing what the employer claims would be the union dues.
- No changing the time, location or method of paycheck distribution.

The case stemmed from a complaint by the Operating Engineers against Kalin Construction Co. in Sodus, Mich., over a 1994 election. The board ordered a new election.

California wage law upheld

A federal appeals court has upheld California's prevailing wage law that sets a two-tiered payment system.

Two nonunion contractors had argued that the federal Employment Retirement Income Security Act pre-empted the law. ERISA sets guidelines for the protection of employee benefit plans.

The California law requires contractors on state-funded public works projects to pay prevailing wages without crediting higher-than-prevailing benefit contributions. The contractor can pay workers the total amount of the prevailing wage and benefits in cash wages, or pay a combination of at least the prevailing cash wage plus employee benefit plan contributions that together amount to at least the total amount of the prevailing wage.

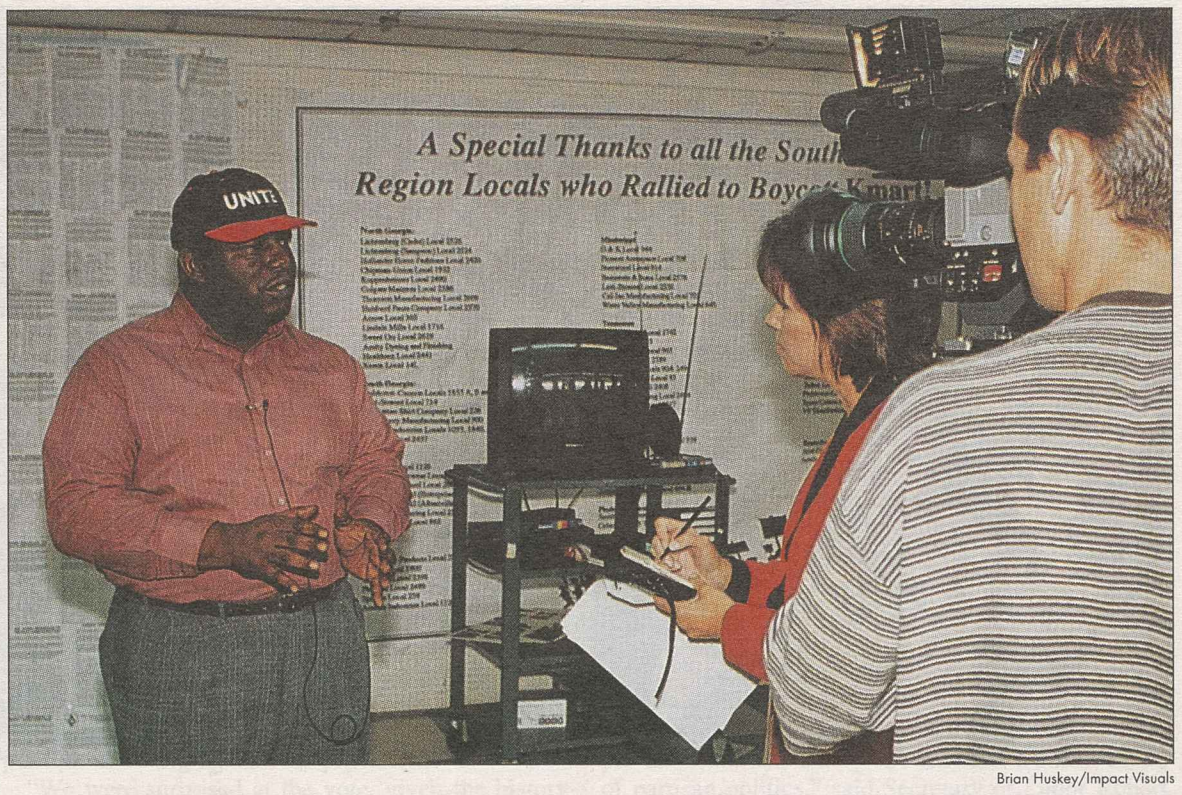
The contractors, WSB Electric Inc. and J.R. Roberts Corp., had appealed a similar ruling by the U.S. District Court. In its ruling, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said ERISA exemptions did not apply to the California law, which regulates wages in general, nor wages that are part of a specific benefit plan.

The case is WSB Electric vs. Curry.

Court curtails company

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has issued an order enjoining the cleaning company United States Service Industries Inc. from retaliating against employees because of their union activities and from otherwise violating the National Labor Relations Act.

The Washington-based janitorial firm has been the focus of an ongoing organizing drive by Service Employees Local 82. The order enjoins the company from, among other actions, transferring and discharging employees because of their union activity; engaging in surveillance of employees; interrogating employees; and threatening employees with reprisal.



Brian Huskey/Impact Visuals

Kmart worker Geno Mock tells a local TV news crew what it means to the workers to have a fair contract.

UNITE's Kmart pact 'excellent'

By Colleen M. O'Neill

The community of Greensboro, N.C., again rallied around civil rights and human rights, helping to produce a top-notch contract for Kmart distribution center workers after a bitter struggle.

Religious leaders and activists gave vigorous support to the workers at the facility, who voted for union representation in September 1993. As the months passed, workers learned they earned by far the lowest wages of all Kmart's "hard-line" distribution workers, and they built their case for justice and dignity with patience and confidence.

In fact, the predominantly white work forces at the chain's other hard-line centers were making hourly wages an average of $4 higher than those of the mostly minority Greensboro workers.

The battle grew to include a community-sponsored boycott, civil disobedience demonstrations and other actions. Workers' persistence paid off with a three-year contract covering some 550 workers that went into effect July 28. It includes:

- Pay increases ranging from 22 percent to 52 percent over the next 24 months.
- Two new paid holidays.
- Increases in paid sick leave.
- Nondiscrimination language.
- New job-bidding, grievance procedures and work standards language.

"This is an excellent new contract," said Bruce Raynor, executive vice president and southern regional director of UNITE. "It was a long, tough battle, but the Kmart workers, with the tremendous support from the Greensboro community, were able to force the company to agree to a contract that offers them the highest wage increases that any hard-line distribution center has ever received."

In addition to actions in the Triad area of North Carolina, protests against Kmart's treatment of its workers took place in Atlanta, Houston, Chicago, Cleveland, Memphis, Tenn., and Norfolk, Va.

In real terms, the pact provides an hourly wage boost of 50 cents this year, 75 cents next July and 75 cents in July 1998. Workers also received a 50-cent-per-hour raise last March, during negotiations. The current base rate of $9 an hour will go to $11 by the third year. The starting rate in the warehouse of $7.25 an hour will advance to $9 an hour.

In addition to the wage and sick leave gains, other benefits remain unchanged, such as major medical insurance coverage for employees and dependents, a disability income plan and dental plan — all fully paid by the company — and a retirement savings plan.

Coalitions tailor sweatshop campaign

By Muriel H. Cooper

Two recent Washington events showcased the continued efforts of labor unions, the Department of Labor, celebrities and retailers to eradicate sweatshops throughout the world.

The "Fashion Industry Forum" and congressional hearing were followed up by a New York demonstration July 30 by the "Stop Sweatshops" Coalition against jeans maker "Guess?" for allowing sweatshop conditions in the manufacture of its garments.

UNITE President Jay Mazur outlined steps that would help eliminate sweatshops during the fashion forum sponsored by the Labor Department.

These measures include manufacturers and retailers taking responsibility for how their products are produced, new industry standards that recognize the growing trend of giant retailers who also are manufacturers, increased resources and powers for the Labor Department, international trade agreements linked to worker rights and corporate codes of conduct.

During a July 15 congressional hearing, Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-N.J.) called for the United States to block the importation of goods made with exploitative child labor and to cut off foreign aid to countries that tolerate sweatshops using child labor.

The International Labor Organization estimates that some 73 million children between the ages of 10 and 14 are employed worldwide. American consumers began to focus on the issue of child labor and the resurgence of sweatshops last summer, when almost 70 workers were found toiling in slave-like conditions in California.

"The shocking revelations from El Monte, Calif., last year — followed by The Gap and Kathie Lee Gifford episodes — have awakened the country to the return of the sweatshop," Mazur said. This past spring, UNITE exposed a New York City sweatshop that produced clothing for the Kathie Lee Gifford line.

"This is more than an economic problem for a particular industry, firm or group of workers," Mazur said. "The injustice and inhumanity of the modern sweatshop constitute a moral challenge for our society — a challenge to some of the most basic democratic and human values."

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich affirmed the Clinton administration's support for ending child labor, and called for such efforts as an international labeling system like the "RUGMARK" tag, which is affixed to hand-knotted carpets certifying that they are not made with child labor.

Nearly 300 garment industry professionals were represented at the DoL forum in Arlington, Va.

Many of the retail representatives said they were working to monitor factories here and abroad that produce clothing for the U.S. market to ensure they are adhering to labor laws.

Also appearing at the forum was sweatshop worker Nancy Penaloza, who described how she worked at least 56 hours a week sewing women's suits for $6 each. The suits are sold for more than $120.

"The factory is very dirty, " she said. "When I'm working, I'm afraid because the rats and mice crawl on my feet. There is only one bathroom for 150 people, and it is very dirty. . . . I hope this forum today will help to make conditions better for garment workers," she said.

USWA: No deal with Bridgestone if workers out

By James B. Parks

Steelworkers President George Becker said he is willing to meet anywhere at anytime to settle the two-year strike against Bridgestone/Firestone, but only if replaced workers are returned to work.

"I would be willing to meet with appropriate officials of Bridgestone/Firestone as soon as one condition is met," Becker said. "That condition is the return to work of all of the workers whom the company has illegally replaced at its facilities. Until that condition is met, any meeting with me would be pointless," he said.

Becker's statement was in response to reports that in a meeting with Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Bridgestone officials said they wanted to meet with Becker and that Becker should be involved in future negotiations.

"While the Steelworkers carry out a worldwide campaign to publicize Bridgestone/Firestone's anti-union, anti-worker conduct, we have amply demonstrated our sincerity in wanting to negotiate a fair contract that will meet the needs of both the company and the union," Becker said. "I urge the company to make a similar show of sincerity by immediately restoring all of the illegally replaced workers."

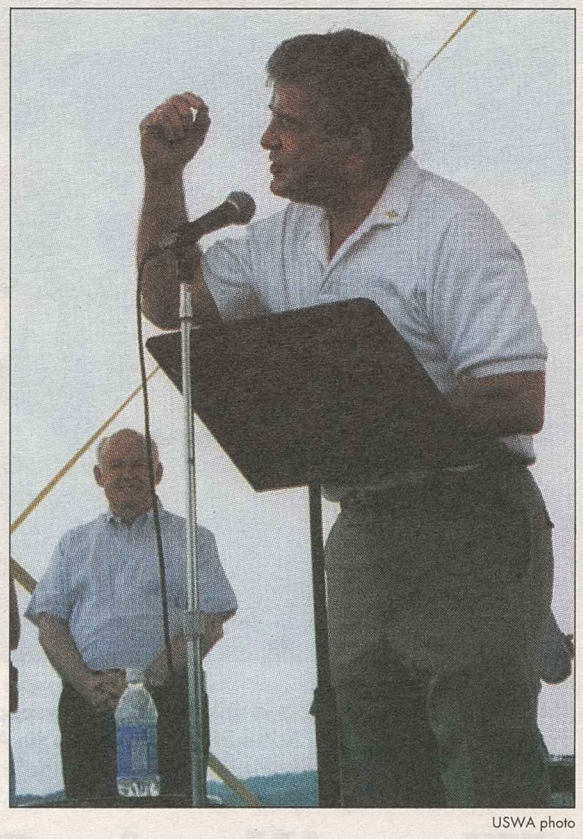
On the second anniversary of the strike, the USWA ratcheted up the pressure on the Japanese tiremaker with an impressive show of international solidarity during the "Days of Rage," July 12-13.

From Nashville, Tenn., to Sao Paulo, Brazil, to Tokyo, workers around the world sent an unqualified message to Bridgestone/Firestone: Settle the strike with the Steelworkers quickly and fairly.

Bridgestone even lost support in its own backyard when Nashville's Metro Transit revoked the company's contract for bus tires. Lucas Tire Co., New Orleans' largest independent tire dealer, also dropped Bridgestone's tires.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney and Becker led a march by 2,000 workers and strike supporters in Nashville, the tiremaker's U.S. headquarters. "The only way to cope with corporate lizards is to lift the rocks they hide under and turn their bellies up to the sun," Sweeney told the crowd. The strikers have "13.1 million brothers and sisters who will walk before they drive an automobile, or ride a bus, or operate an earthmover that slithers down the street on Bridgestone/Firestone tires," he said.

The USWA and Bridgestone/Firestone have been unable to reach agreement on a contract since July 1994, when 4,000 workers walked off the job. The workers, formerly members of the Rubber Workers, suspended the strike after 10 months. During the strike, Bridgestone/Firestone hired 2,300 replacement workers. At issue is the rehiring of 700 strikers.



USWA photo

Steelworkers President George Becker, with AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, exhorts workers at union's "Days of Rage" anniversary rally in Nashville, Tenn.

RENGO, Japan's labor federation, held a press conference in Tokyo condemning the management of Bridgestone and issuing a strong statement supporting the USWA and demanding a fair settlement.

In Argentina, 2,000 workers staged a three-hour rally and work stoppage in solidarity with the USWA and to show Bridgestone officials that they would strike if there is no progress in their talks. Bridgestone has threatened to eliminate 150 jobs there if the union does not accept its last offer.

In Brazil, workers staged one-hour work stoppages at each of three shift changes, and all shifts engaged in a work slowdown that they called "working like turtles."

In Europe, union representatives from every Bridgestone plant met with top company officials in Brussels and demanded that a just agreement be reached.

For the two weeks prior to the meeting, European workers handbilled at all Bridgestone plants on the continent and displayed black flags on all union bulletin boards.

In addition to the rallies, the USWA ran a 30-minute television program in 20 cities July 13 exposing the activities of the company Becker calls "a poster child for corporate irresponsibility."

Meanwhile, Nashville city officials denied the USWA's request to extend the permit for Camp Justice, the tent city occupied by replaced workers located just outside Bridgestone/Firestone headquarters. The 90-day permit expired July 15. The union has appealed the decision, and an Aug. 13 hearing has been set.

Conrail last tie in railroad breakthrough

Continued from Page 1

and it wanted an arbitrator to weigh in, a move the union called delaying tactics.

Fleming said management's need to accept job security items and a production-gang definition were in exchange for concessions already made by labor in negotiations, and declared that his union would not enter into a national agreement with one carrier refusing to comply with key provisions.

When the chips came down, management agreed to conform to the gang flexibility rules established with the other national carriers. In addition, the union secured improvements in Conrail's supplemental unemployment plan for workers who have been furloughed.

Under the terms of the five-year pact, workers would receive a 3.5 percent pay raise retroactive to Dec. 1, 1995, as well as future 3.5 percent increases on July 1, 1997, and July 1, 1999.

Five days before the agreement was reached, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney warned that with hundreds of millions of dollars in profits and top executives getting more than $1 million in salary, "Conrail's insistence on keeping the cash in the corporate suites (threatened) to unravel a national agreement for 145,000 rail workers and 34 other railroads.

"Nearly a decade ago, Conrail employees helped save the company from bankruptcy by forgoing benefits that ease the pain of a layoff — a benefit given to nearly all other rail workers," Sweeney said. "Now it's time for the workers to reap a share of the profits they helped create."

Fleming thanked the AFL-CIO's leadership, noting that the federation "stood beside the BMWE in solidarity as we fought for a strong contract, and made invaluable contributions to keeping the negotiating process moving forward."

The ratification process is expected to take several weeks.

The history of contract talks in the rail industry has long been marked by carrier inflexibility and stalling tactics, as management has relied on a sympathetic Congress to achieve what could not be secured at the negotiating table.

In 1991 and 1992, Congress intervened to impose settlements, stemming from a round of bargaining started in 1988. The AFL-CIO denounced that government interference in the collective bargaining process.

Three presidential emergency boards were appointed by President Clinton in the current round. Sweeney testified before two of the boards on behalf of rail workers. The tentative agreements followed recommendations from those boards.

Teamsters nominate Carey, Hoffa for membership vote

By David Kameras

The Teamsters completed their 25th international convention in Philadelphia July 19 after nominating President Ron Carey and challenger James Hoffa for the top post of the AFL-CIO's largest union.

A direct ballot election is set for November.

In his candidate acceptance speech, Carey pointed to the reversal of a 16-year membership decline, development of grass-roots and educational programs, anti-corruption efforts and achievement "of some of the best contracts our members have ever worked under" as evidence of a track record of fighting "to put our members first."

In accepting his nomination, Hoffa proposed a new future for the union, "one with respectable contracts and with a new general president who won't take orders from outsiders," an allusion to the federal consent decree under which the union currently is functioning.

While in Philadelphia, the IBT sought to resolve a dispute with May Department Stores, which is shuttering a Strawbridge & Clothier warehouse occupied by protesting workers and moving operations out of the area. Those efforts were praised by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, who also lauded the union as "one of the brightest lights on the organizing horizon."

"We need to get ourselves a new organizing attitude and begin treating anti-union bosses like we treat anti-union politicians," Sweeney said. "If a boss fires somebody, we should get the boss fired. If a boss takes us on, we take the fight public. If the boss breaks the law, we break their bank account, sit in their offices and get in their faces."

Delegates voted to establish a code of ethics for pension and health fund trustees, add the president of Teamsters Canada to the international's general executive board, bar members and officials from associating with organized crime and uphold the suspension and expulsion of a number of officials accused of corruption.

But spirited and sometimes raucous debate between the two presidential camps held up action on a number of proposals affecting electoral procedures, area conferences, officer compensation and the union's strike fund, prompting Carey to call for a special convention after the election. "That's the only way we can complete our business, to take it out of politics and have an orderly convention."

The commotion in the hall frequently disrupted the course of business and prevented Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) from addressing the delegates, who nonetheless united to cheer Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, there to credit the Clinton administration for having "finally put in place a National Labor Relations Board that understands that collective bargaining is a right and not a privilege."

Reich pledged use of the president's veto authority to block Republican efforts to gut workplace safety, scrap overtime and allow the establishment of company unions. "What's good for American workers is good for America," he said, "and that is why we need strong unions in this country."

A poll of rank-and-file Teamsters by Peter D. Hart Research Associates indicates that members prefer Bill Clinton over Bob Dole 58-30, and 65 percent approve of Clinton's performance. However, the convention declined to endorse a specific candidate for the White House, indicating instead that local unions will promote voter registration and education.

"We don't tell our members how to vote," Carey said. "We provide them with the facts, and they will make up their own minds. On the major economic issues facing working families, it's clear that most of our members believe that the Clinton-Gore ticket is a better choice than Bob Dole."

BARGAINING

West Coast ports hum

The Longshoremen reached a tentative three-year contract with the Pacific Maritime Association that would provide wage increases of $3 per hour for 8,000 workers at 26 ports on the West Coast.

The ILWU's Longshore Division Caucus ratified the pact July 22 and sent it to the membership for a vote sometime in August. The contract would be retroactive to July 1, when the previous contract expired.

Under the agreement, the workers would receive a $2 raise in the first year and $1 in the second. The increases would be the first since 1993 for the workers.

Skill rate differentials also increase for longshore equipment operators and marine clerks. The highest differential of 6.75 percent will increase to 20 percent over term. Pension benefits also would increase for future retirees from $2,415 per month to $2,520 in the third year.

Janitors in tentative pact

After turning up the heat on San Francisco building owners and managers with a 99 percent strike vote, 4,000 janitors were voting Aug. 3 on a contract that would increase wages and pensions by 25 percent.

The Building Owners and Managers Association and the San Francisco Contractors' Association had proposed dismantling the union hiring hall, reducing health and welfare coverage and eliminating seniority rights, even while building owners are reaping record profits.

The janitors, who are mostly immigrants, minorities and women, are represented by Service Employees Local 87.

Victory in Grayson, Ky.

A two-year fight for dignity and decent wages by the Service Employees at Cook Family Foods ended when the workers ratified a new contract.

The new contract doubles current pay levels, exceeding industry standards, the union said. While the contract does not include a union shop clause, some 188 of the 200 workers who voted in the election joined the union.

The employees, formerly members of the Firemen and Oilers, struck for more than a year at the Grayson, Ky., plant. About 100 employees returned to work after a federal court in Cincinnati overturned an NLRB decision certifying the union as bargaining representative for the workers.

IBEW in Georgia pact

About 5,000 Electrical Workers at Georgia Power will receive a 7 percent pay raise after ratifying a new three-year contract.

The deal, approved June 28, covers power plant operators, linemen, meter readers and maintenance and repair workers. They will receive a 3 percent wage increase in the first year, followed by hikes of 2 percent in 1997 and 1998.

Shift differentials and per diems also increased, and the amount workers must pay for long-term disability benefits declined.

Supervisors back workers

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution in support of the California Professional Employees, an affiliate of the Painters that represents workers at the city's Economic Opportunity Council.

The resolution urged the council to negotiate and reach a collective bargaining agreement. The union has been attempting to bargain a new contract to replace one that expired July 1, but agency officials refuse to negotiate.

The agency also is fighting union efforts to organize employees in three other departments at the agency. The union, which represents 70 employees who provide day care for poor children and home weatherization services, has filed unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board over the negotiations and organizing roadblocks.

San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer and U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos, all Democrats, already have made public statements in support of the workers.



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Meka Murphy, a Teamster and striking Detroit newspaper employee, speaks to a crowd in front of the National Press Building in mid-July. Some 200 delegates to the A. Philip Randolph Institute's annual education conference joined Murphy and other strikers in protesting the presence of the Detroit News and Knight-Ridder bureau offices in the building.

'We will win Detroit strike'

Sweeney boosts strikers as solidarity actions grow

By James B. Parks

Organized labor intends to turn up the heat as high as necessary to win the Detroit newspaper strike, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said.

"We're going to win those strikes. That's a promise and a commitment," Sweeney said, referring to the strikes in Detroit and at Bridgestone/Firestone. "To really scare (the Detroit newspapers), we have to have an even stronger impact on profits, circulation and advertising," he said. "That is what we are planning to do.

"First of all, we have to win this for the strikers. Second, we have to win this for the labor movement. I'm not sure if you appreciate how much focus there is on this strike in other parts of the country. This is just an example of the corporate greed we see," Sweeney told a crowd of strikers during a visit to Detroit.

Some 2,000 employees of the News and Free Press, owned by Gannett and Knight-Ridder, respectively, have been on strike since July 13, 1995, after negotiations failed to produce a new agreement. Management and imported scabs from other papers are producing the newspapers. Hired union-busting security goons from Vance and Huffmaster are delivering the papers.

Striking unions include the Teamsters, Communications Workers, Graphic Communications and The Newspaper Guild.

The strikers settled an unfair labor practice charge July 12 by agreeing not to coerce current newspaper employees by making threats, gathering in crowds to picket or blocking driveways.

The settlement agreement was spurred by a National Labor Relations Board threat to seek an injunction against alleged misconduct, and by the fuel such proceedings might add to the newspapers' racketeering suit against the unions, said Samuel McKnight, attorney for the striking unions.

"The real violence here is the company's effort to destroy the working lives of 2,000 decent employees," McKnight said. "We'll continue to do everything we've been doing to inflict on them huge economic losses until they bargain in good faith."

The strikers repeated their desire to negotiate a fair settlement. In an editorial in the striker-produced Sunday Journal, the unions urged management to "make us an offer. Respond to one of ours. 'Drop dead' or 'Go away' is not a useful response. Get off the dime and begin serious negotiations about a contract.

"If the absentee owners choose not to negotiate, however, they shouldn't kid themselves that the strike is over or that they are going to win back the trust and readership and dollars of the community they have so egregiously insulted with their arrogance and union-busting," the unions said.

The strikers continue to get strong support from other unions. The Locomotive Engineers, meeting in Detroit, donated $20,000 to help the strike.



Michael Osborne/Colorado Labor Advocate

Delegates to the central labor council conference make clear their support for the Detroit strikers at Gannett-owned KUSA-TV in Denver. More than 300 people rallied and chanted in front of the station offices in what KUSA executives branded a "riot."

Gwend Johnson, an assistant to CWA President Morton Bahr, announced that all of the families on the Adopt-A-Family list had been adopted as of July 1. But donations still are needed to keep the fund solvent. Contributions can be mailed to: Adopt-A-Family, c/o Gwend Johnson, CWA Headquarters, 501 Third St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001, phone: 202/434-1115.

On the first anniversary of the strike, the strikers rallied at the Sterling Heights printing plant where the scab papers are produced. In San Jose, Calif., more than 100 people rallied and raised $500 for the strikers.

In Washington, some 200 delegates to the A. Philip Randolph Institute's annual education conference joined Newspaper Guild President Linda K. Foley, striking Detroit newspaper employees and Washington Metropolitan AFL-CIO President Joslyn N. Williams in front of the National Press Building to protest the presence of the Detroit News and Knight-Ridder bureau offices in the building.

"We don't want union busters in our town," Foley said.

Strikers Meka Murphy and Gean Odroniec, both members of IBT Local 372, told the crowd they had not received an adequate raise since 1989. "All we want is a decent contract and a decent wage and to go back to work," Odroniec said.

"We made this company," Murphy said. "We built this company, and this is what they do to us."

UNION NEWS

New leaders for California

The California AFL-CIO charted a new course with an expanded executive council and two new leaders.

Art Pulaski, secretary-treasurer of the San Mateo Labor Council, was elected executive secretary-treasurer July 31 by some 800 delegates, replacing the retiring Jack Henning. Tom Rankin, state federation research director and lobbyist, was elected president, succeeding Albin J. Gruhn, who also retired.

Delegates approved the expansion of the council from 36 to 46 to increase representation by women and people of color.

State federations must set a higher standard for organizing, and unions must adopt a more aggressive organizing attitude, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the delegates. In order to reverse union membership losses, Sweeney called on state federations "to roll out the big guns" and shift more of their resources to organizing.

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson also addressed the convention.

No to harassment

Women's, labor, legal, religious and community organizations have pledged their support for expand protections for sexual harassment victims.

"We stand solidly with those supporting this legislation that will serve to hold responsible parties accountable when perpetrators of sexual harassment are negligently hired or retained in the workplace," said Massachusetts AFL-CIO President Joseph Faherty.

Boston 9to5, National Association of Working Women, was instrumental in gaining a broadened interpretation of the state's sexual harassment statute. The measure would allow victims of sexual harassment to file cases directly in Superior Court within three years of the incident or file with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

It also would extend the statute of limitations from six months to three years for all forms of workplace discrimination.

County runs sweatshop

The Los Angeles County Labor Federation announced that Los Angeles County and its Home Supportive Services program has received the "L.A.'s Biggest Sweatshop" award.

The Home Supportive Services program pays subpoverty wages and regularly denies workers payment for hours worked, raises and opportunities for advancement. Workers don't receive health benefits either, despite the fact that many are injured on the job providing care for others.

The award was presented by an exploited Thai worker whose story focused attention on the resurgence of sweatshops in America. Last summer during a raid, almost 70 Thai workers were discovered working in El Monte, Calif., in slave-like conditions.

Privatization panned

Postal unions testifying before the House subcommittee on the Postal Service said they supported some provisions in the Postal Reform Act of 1996, but they adamantly oppose privatization and the dilution of bargaining rights.

Postal Workers President Moe Biller said the APWU supports provisions on competitive mail, changes in USPS financing and law enforcement improvements. Letter Carriers President Vincent R. Sombrotto also favored those provisions, but challenged a proposal that rate adjustments could be used to restrict the financial component of collective bargaining agreements.

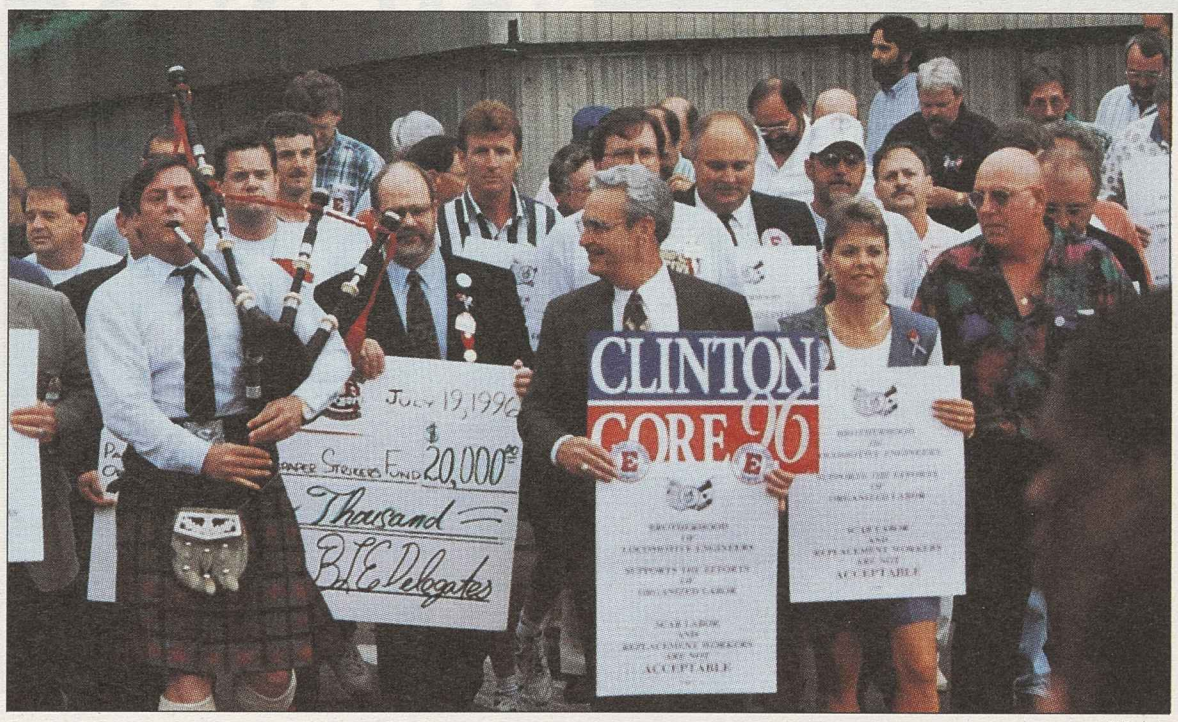
Mail Handlers President William H. Quinn also testified.

Web clean-up campaign

Service Employees Local 82, home of the Justice for Janitors campaign in the nation's capital, has unveiled its World Wide Web site, Toxin Watch.

The site includes information on toxic spills, releases and other environmental problems of select oil, gas and chemical companies.

The web address is http//www.seiu.org/local/82-dc/toxin.htm.



BLE photo

Locomotive Engineers President Clarence Monin, with the Clinton-Gore sign, leads convention delegates in march to support striking Detroit newspaper workers. Secretary-Treasurer Russell W. Bennett carries a symbolic check representing the $20,000 delegates donated to help the strikers and their families.

BLE elects new leadership

By David Kameras

By a 320-276 vote, delegates at the Locomotive Engineers' convention in Detroit elected a new president, Clarence Monin, formerly the union's first vice president.

Monin defeated incumbent Ronald McLaughlin. A third candidate, Paul Morrison, chairman of the union's California legislative board, received 23 votes. Also elected to five-year terms were Edward Dubrowski, first vice president and Russell W. Bennett, secretary-treasurer.

Monin pledged to "mobilize, energize and organize the Locomotive Engineers and the other employees we represent." He indicated that he wants to make BLE, which joined the AFL-CIO in 1989, 133 years after its founding, a larger and more aggressive part of the labor movement "in concert with the AFL-CIO and the Transportation Trades Department."

While in the union's No. 2 position, Monin served as U.S. national chairman of the BLE safety task force, helping the National Transportation Safety Board investigate major rail accidents, was vice chairman of the union's U.S. national legislative board and directed BLE's education and training department. He also assisted in on-site negotiations during the most recent round of contract talks.

In an example of the union's emphasis on solidarity, a thousand members, officers and family members joined with striking Detroit News and Free Press workers in a march to demand that management bargain in good faith, and passed the hat to raise $20,000 to help out strikers and their families.

BLE's show of unity went "above and beyond the call of solidarity," said Margaret Trimer-Hartley, an activist who before the strike was an education writer for the Free Press, and who was asked to address the convention. "I felt particularly proud to be there because my father was a railroad man."

"I think what we saw in Detroit is an awakening of what can be done between sister unions of the AFL-CIO," union spokesman Steve Fitzgerald said.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told delegates that labor's recent successes in getting the Senate to approve a minimum-wage increase and defeat a national right-to-work bill, as well as blocking the so-called TEAM Act and efforts to eliminate new repetitive stress injury regulations, have triggered efforts by business lobbies and anti-worker forces in Congress to target unionists with lies and half-truths.

"Well, I don't know about you, but I'm ready," he declared. "I'm delighted to take my place beside all their other targets: the young, the old, working families, the disabled and the poor. I stand before you today and say I'm proud to be a target.

"Will you stand with me?" he asked. "Will you stand with me and (Secretary-Treasurer) Rich Trumka and (Executive Vice President) Linda Chavez-Thompson as we take back our country?" The convention responded with a standing ovation.

Sweeney warned of the consequences that would result if Bob Dole, "the 'Darth Vader' of American politics," wins the presidency in November, and outlined the federation's grass-roots legislative and political education program with which "we're going to win, from the courthouse to the White House."

"Why am I so sure? Because America's workers are fed up with seeing their wages keep falling while the stock market and productivity and executive salaries and corporate profits keep skyrocketing," he said.

Other convention speakers included Railroad Signalmen President W.D. Pickett, Canadian Labour Congress Secretary-Treasurer V.M. "Butch" Speakman, labor member of the Railroad Retirement Board, Rep. David E. Bonior (D-Mich.), Detroit Mayor Dennis W. Archer and Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene Molitoris, whose reception was characterized as "restrained and polite."

AFA: Ground Valujet's executives

Citing continuing safety concerns, the Flight Attendants asked the Transportation Department to give the boot to top officers at ValuJet Airlines.

Charging that management is either incapable or unwilling to run a safe airline, the union, which represents the airline's 600 flight attendants, said chief executive Robert Priddy and chief operating officer Lewis Jordan "should not be trusted with the public safety."

"This management team bears full responsibility for ValuJet's horrendous safety record," said AFA President Patricia Friend. "They have proven they cannot run an airline safely, and the DoT must take action."

ValuJet's fleet was grounded on June 18 after numerous inspections by the Federal Aviation Administration turned up serious safety problems at the cut-rate carrier in the wake of a May 11 crash in Florida that killed all on board. Since beginning service in 1993, the airline has had six accidents, been investigated for an additional eight safety "incidents" and garnered 340 service difficulty reports at the FAA. There were 59 unscheduled landings in the first five months of this year alone.

Despite this ghastly record, management is seeking permission to get airborne again. The AFA said the carrier's filing seeks to keep certain records secret and to gain an exemption from DoT procedural rules governing public notice and comment.

The AFA also is pushing for passage of legislation that would give "whistleblower" protection to aviation workers reporting safety violations in their workplace.

In another aviation development:

- The Air Traffic Controllers, an affiliate of the Marine Engineers, has provided initial funding for creation of the National Aviation Research Institute, which is intended to improve air safety through the development of new technology based on the input of the workers who actually operate the resulting equipment.

Noting that the technology of the present air traffic control system is 10 to 15 years behind, Acting Executive Director Mike Connor said the new group will be listening to those "able to talk about what their needs are within the system, rather than people who cannot make it happen when they worked with the FAA."

Wage fight on national track

Congressional vote is just part of the story

By David Kameras

Congress has voted to raise the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 an hour over two years, but that amount is considered hardly enough for workers in many states and localities, who have forged "living wage" campaigns from coast to coast.

Through its America Needs A Raise campaign, the AFL-CIO has been working with coalitions throughout the nation to champion the notion that people who work full time ought to earn enough to support their families.

The most recent breakthrough in the effort to give America a raise occurred in Oregon, where 114,494 signatures were collected — many more than the number needed — to mandate a ballot initiative for November that seeks to raise the state's hourly minimum wage from $4.75 to $6.50 over three years.

"This is the first step on the long road to give our lowest-paid working families the raise they justly deserve," said Oregon AFL-CIO President Irv Fletcher, who worked with a coalition of more than 50 labor, religious, social justice and environmental groups to get the initiative qualified three days after the U.S. Senate approved an increase in the federal minimum wage.

A similar success was scored just to the south, where an initiative to put on the ballot a measure to raise California's minimum wage by $1.50 qualified with almost 550,000 signatures. AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney was on hand to help submit the qualifying ballots.

Voters in Denver and New Orleans will see the fruits of local initiatives to boost wages on their ballots. Other citywide initiatives are on the move in Albuquerque, N.M., Boston, Chicago, Houston, Milwaukee, New York and Washington.

Fletcher said that Congress "is just catching up to where we've been for the past five years. We intend to continue the proud and progressive Oregon tradition of setting superior standards for basic worker protections and quality of life for our families."

Those standards are more than an abstraction to Jeanie Taylor of Salem, Ore., a single mother, full-time student and minimum-wage worker. "I'm not a teen-ager flipping hamburgers for pocket change," she said. "I'm a working mom who is struggling to provide for my family, while attending school full time — and $4.75 an hour just doesn't cut it.

"If we increase the minimum wage in Oregon, I may not have to choose between buying shoes for my son and putting food on the table," Taylor said.

The AFL-CIO's "America Needs A Raise" campaign goes beyond the minimum wage. It seeks to spotlight what has been a decades-long slide in the buying power of American workers, which in terms of hourly earnings fell 12 percent between 1978 and 1995. It draws attention to the 8 million workers who have to work two jobs to make ends meet, and the longer hours they put in on those jobs. It points to the drop in median family income despite an explosive growth in multiearner families.

Real average weekly earnings did receive a boost in June, rising 2.2 percent, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

Much of that increase was due to a 1.5 percent growth in average weekly hours, and average hourly earnings rose 0.8 percent. For the 12 months, real average weekly earnings grew by 1.7 percent.

Median real weekly earnings actually fell slightly in the second quarter, from $301 to $300 in constant 1982 dollars.

Contributing to the positive real earnings in June was the continued low inflation rate, with consumer prices (CPI-W) registering a tiny 0.1 percent increase. Decreases in the costs of apparel and upkeep and transportation helped to offset a large run-up in food and beverage prices. Producer prices, which help predict future performance, rose 0.2 percent.

DATA

Real Weekly Earnings

June	+2.2 percent
May	-0.2 percent

Merchandise Trade Deficit (Census Basis)

May	$13.2 billion
April	$12.4 billion

Top U.S. export continues to be jobs

The U.S. merchandise trade deficit widened in May, from $12.4 billion to $13.2 billion, as the nation continued to increase its export of jobs, notably to the Pacific Rim.

The goods deficit with China jumped from $2.3 billion to $3.1 billion, and stands at $12.4 billion for the year — a 7.3 percent increase over 1995. Although a weaker yen has helped narrow the bilateral gap with Japan, that trend may change in the coming months because of a recent appreciation of the dollar that made U.S. products more expensive.

The five-month total merchandise deficit was $57.7 billion, close to the $60.4 billion record set in 1995.

"The U.S. trade deficit continues to expand, despite the fact that unit labor costs continue to decline relative to most of our trading partners," noted Mark Anderson, director of the AFL-CIO Task Force on Trade. "It is clear that lower wages are not the way to improve the international trade position of the United States."

Merchandise shortfalls with America's trading partners in the North American Free Trade Agreement also have grown, with year-to-date totals reaching $8.7 billion with Canada, up from $6.5 billion in 1995, and $6.8 billion with Mexico, up from $6.2 billion.

The troubles for American workers created by the ill-advised pact continue to materialize, as evidenced by the certification for NAFTA transitional adjustment assistance of 250 laid-off Pacificorp utility workers, bringing the total of those eligible to more than 72,000. That total represents a mere fraction of those actually affected by displacement.

Some 95 percent of imported electricity comes from Canada.

Meanwhile, at the southern border, Department of Transportation officials succumbed to pressure from trucking firms and agreed to weaken a truck safety inspection program on the Texas-Mexico border.

Under the new plan, companies can self-certify that their trucks have no safety problems, despite DoT findings that 51 percent of the trucks crossing into Texas were found too dangerous to operate on U.S. highways. DoT found 34 percent of trucks entering California to be unsafe, along with 44 percent of trucks entering Arizona and 78 percent entering New Mexico.

With the certification, Mexican drivers — who earn as little as $10 a day — can travel without restriction in those states, and throughout the United States and Canada by 2000. Trucking deregulation is a provision under NAFTA that the Teamsters and several Mexican driver groups want renegotiated.

In addition, NAFTA has been roundly criticized for its weak and unenforceable labor and environmental side agreements. Chile, which has been considered for membership in an expanded NAFTA, has agreed to join the Southern Cone Common Market, or Mercosur, increasing pressure on the United States to grease the skids toward new trade agreements, regardless of their potential flaws.

Trade performance in the first five months of the year was particularly dismal in motor vehicles ($21.9 billion deficit), clothing and footwear (16.5 billion), data processing and office machinery ($9.6 billion), electrical machinery ($8.3 billion), consumer electronics ($4.6 billion), toys and sporting goods ($3.1 billion), iron and steel products ($3 billion), furniture and bedding ($2.3 billion) and paper and paperboard ($1 billion). Surpluses were scored in airplanes and parts ($8.1 billion) and general and specialized machinery ($3 billion).

On a balance-of-payments basis, May's combined trade deficit in goods and services was $10.9 billion, $1.3 billion more than in April and the worst monthly figure recorded this decade.

— David Kameras

Unions plan how to make 'money talk'

By Colleen M. O'Neill

America's workers are due millions of dollars in pension money upon their retirements — but the funds can work to their benefit long before their golden years.

Strategic investment of funds can help shore up workers' lives against the battering ram of corporate irresponsibility and give them a real voice in the workplace because, as the adage goes, "money talks."

These "capital strategies" are just one of the many new, aggressive approaches being followed by unions to serve the interests of working people, noted AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka.

"Too often, working people's pension funds are used to finance mindless corporate downsizing, exorbitant executive salaries, stagnant wages for the great majority of workers and management tactics to defeat organizing campaigns or even destroy existing unions," Trumka said in a speech June 14 to the Industrial Heartland Labor Investment Forum.

Rather, he said, "we must invest in plants, equipment, modernizing, new products, innovation, training for workers and new work systems which democratize the workplace. . . . What we need to do now, collectively, is to make sure that workers' money speaks for them and not against them."

In a digest for union leaders on capital strategies published in May, the federation described innovative approaches already at work in towns across the country, crafting employee buyouts of industrial firms, responding to privatization and ensuring financial capital is working for union members and their communities.

For example, pension funds can be used to make local investments, such as financing union-built real estate, or to show solidarity against anti-union institutions. That was the case when hundreds of union members withdrew their money from the First National Bank of Anchorage after it refused to give unionized contractors a fair chance to bid on the construction of two new buildings.

In another instance, the Mine Workers bargained for a nationwide 401(k) savings plan offering investments in socially responsible companies.

The guide explores both those strategies and the legal framework behind them, including shareholder activism, employee ownership programs and financial institutions with union ownership.

The participants of the Industrial Heartland Labor Investment Forum concluded that "now is the time for workers to stop believing financial professionals who tell them they face a choice between a job and a pension. Instead, they must identify their own capital resources and demand a voice in how they operate."

The forum also put forth these recommendations:

- Identify where workers, unions, churches and communities have assets, and invest those assets in the community's long-term future.
- Demand that corporations take the high road to profitability.
- Support current efforts in Congress to promote joint trusteeship of private-sector pension funds, which would begin to give workers a voice in the operation of their own money.
- Coordinate capital strategies among unions and educate workers.
- Create union-controlled investment funds to serve workers.
- Explore tax incentives for long-term domestic industrial development.
- Collectively bargain for joint trusteeship over pension funds.
- Build coalitions.

NEWSMAKERS

Super-heavyweight Olympic boxer **Lawrence Clay-Bey**, an AFSCME member and prison guard from Hartford, Conn., keeps things in perspective. After losing a bout the day after the tragic bombing in Centennial Park, Clay-Bey told reporters, "When you compare someone's life with the Olympic Games, there is no comparison. We go on with our individual careers, our lives, but there were two individuals whose lives ended last night. That is what is most important." Reflecting on his loss, Clay-Bey said: "Smile, it's not the end of the world. It's the Olympics. Smile."

Former AFL-CIO and Transportation Communications Union Vice President **Joaquin F. Otero** is leaving his current position Aug. 16 as deputy undersecretary for international labor at the U.S. Labor Department for a post with the Washington public relations firm of Fingerhut Powers & Smith. Otero also headed DoL's Bureau of International Labor Affairs, with responsibility for the labor side accord of the North American Free Trade Agreement, international child labor issues and labor standards and human rights concerns.

AFL-CIO Director of Occupational Safety and Health **Peg Seminario** and **Andrea K. Taylor**, an occupational health consultant for the UAW, were reappointed for two-year terms to the National Advisory Committee for Occupational Safety and Health by Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich. The term of **Michael J. Wright**, director of health, safety and the environment for the Steelworkers, was extended for a third year.

Anthony R. Sarmiento, assistant director of the AFL-CIO Education Department, has been nominated by President Clinton to the National Institute for Literacy Advisory Board, which works to upgrade the work force, reduce welfare dependency, raise the standard of living and create safer communities.

Susan Mackie is the new comptroller of the AFL-CIO, replacing **William (Bucky) Collins**, who retired. Mackie worked with several unions and the AFL-CIO as an associate with the Thomas Havey accounting firm in Washington.

Patsy Howell has been appointed acting director of the AFL-CIO Department of Support Services, replacing **Edwin M. Schmidt**, who retired. Howell, who will retire at the end of the year, also continues with duties in the Accounting Department.

DEATH

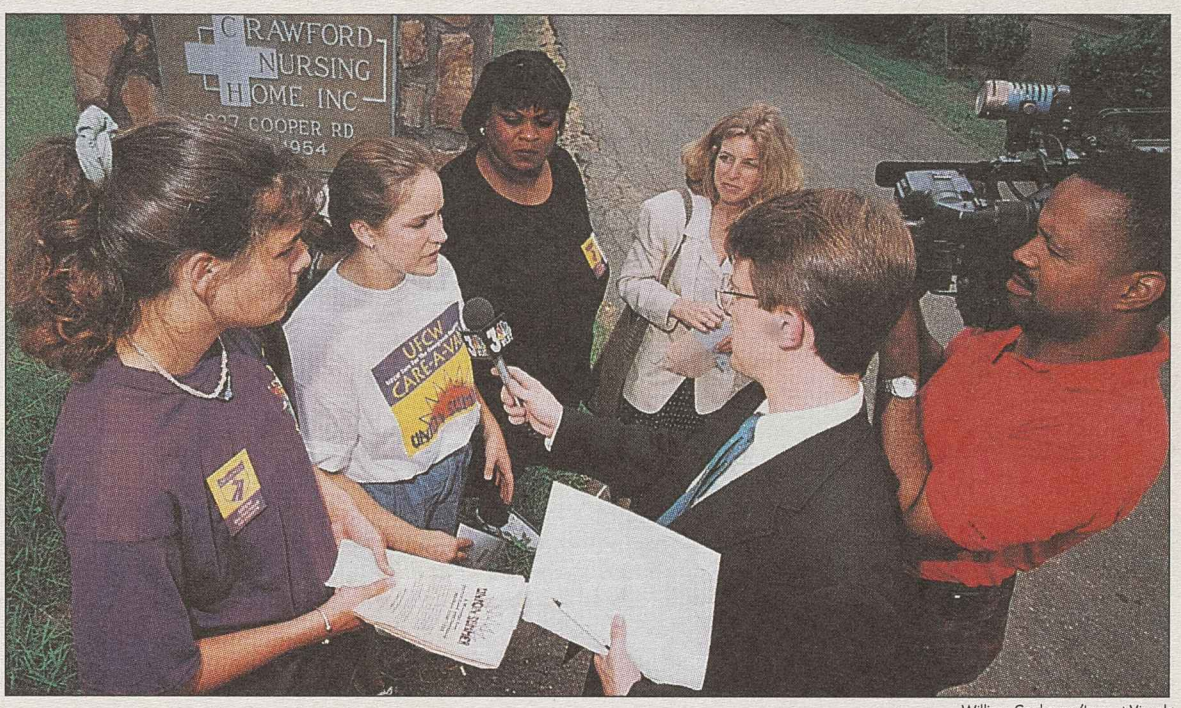
Harold D. McIver, former organizing director of the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department, died from a massive heart attack. He was 65.

McIver began his union career in Atlanta with the Atlantic Steel Co., a plant his father helped organize in 1941. Moving through the ranks, McIver was elected president of his union and later served on the Steelworkers' Wage Policy Committee.

In 1963, he was hired as an IUD organizer under a program established by Walter Reuther, the first IUD president. He became IUD's southeastern coordinator in 1968, national organizing director in 1978, and remained in that position until his retirement in 1994.

"Harold McIver was beyond doubt one of the most accomplished and successful organizers in the labor movement, making his mark in the traditionally anti-union South," said Elmer Chatak, president of the IUD. "He assisted IUD's affiliates in organizing hundreds of workplaces and thousands of workers in the deep South."

McIver is survived by his daughter.



William Cochrane/Impact Visuals

Union Summer activist Amy Thrasher is interviewed by the local media after she was shoved by staff at a nursing home where she was handbilling in Jackson, Miss.

Interns learn, make history

Continued from Page 1

in Memphis at the site of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination.

Dubbed the "care-a-van," connecting to the "Care For The Caregivers" nursing home organizing campaign by the UFCW, the Union Summer activists got an up-close and personal view of the realities of organizing nursing home workers.

Southern nursing home operations are among the lowest-paying in a low-wage industry. Workers have one of the highest injury rates, with no health care or pension benefits, giving the industry the infamous reputation of being the most dangerous in which to work.

"The workers need justice and fairness. They need a union," Linda Chavez-Thompson, executive vice president of the AFL-CIO, told the students during an intensive training workshop held in Memphis July 21-23.

"I learned that the conditions are just horrible," said Gussie Bowen, an activist from Florida. "You have to be certified to do the job, but they don't pay you enough money to feed your family."

The mission was not one for the weary. By 6 a.m., most of the activists were up and out of the motel to handbill at nursing homes, only to return at midday in muggy, 90-degree heat to greet the second shift.

"You have to let the workers know that they have nothing to fear," said Vanessa Scott, one of seven nursing home workers traveling with the activists. "You have to let them know that no one will see the authorization card. The card just says that they are interested in having a union come in. It doesn't mean you're in the union."

Deep into the night, the activists — fueled with the emotions of the day — plotted strategy on how to get around the workers' all-too-real fear of being identified with a union, tossing out ideas like so many balls bouncing off a wall: trace workers' license plates to get addresses and set up home calls; convince other local unions to help in the organizing; reach out to the local media; pass out brochures asking the workers questions that end with the tag line, "if you answered yes, you need a union."

They talked with four nursing home workers from Cogburn nursing home in Mobile, who were fired when they expressed an interest in organizing. The union lost the election.

"I was mad," dietary aide Alma Hayward said of the election. "When we tried to talk about the union, we were disciplined or fired. But the administrator could talk against the union as much as he pleased. But we are taking them to court (on federal labor law violations), and what is done in the dark will come to light. So, we really didn't lose," she said.

"Just listening to the workers talk about being fired from their jobs helped to motivate me to help them get justice," said Diallo Brooks from Washington. "My energy level is high and I get excited about making a difference in peoples' lives."

For many of the activists, the trip marked their first time in the South, a battleground for social change — and the beginning of a living lesson in the connection between civil rights and economic justice.

Under the hotel balcony where Martin Luther King died, they heard the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson explain how King saw the fight by Memphis garbagemen to gain respect by joining AFSCME as the next logical step in the civil rights movement.

They heard mostly female African-American workers from the Delta Pride catfish processing plant in Indianola, Miss., explain the hardships and triumphs of the successful union organizing drives at three of the company's plants.

They walked in front of the Greenwood, Miss., grocery store where black teen-ager Emmett Till stood and was later killed for allegedly whistling at a white woman in 1955.

They listened as Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) described how he survived a 1965 police riot at Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge, where marchers were beaten and fire-hosed for seeking the right to vote. And they reflected on King's poignant message of commitment to justice in his letters from the Birmingham jail.

"We are showing that my generation cares," said Allen Bozeman from Prattville, Ala. "We are doing something good. We want to contribute to our communities. We may not accomplish everything, but we did stand up for caregivers," he said.

Community services delegates show power of giving

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Just miles from the Detroit News and Free Press strike, more than 500 delegates to the AFL-CIO Community Services conference gathered in Dearborn, Mich., to aid the striking newspaper workers and to chart the course for labor's community services.

During a rally and Solidarity Court to benefit the strikers, delegates listened intently as striker after striker detailed the realities of the one-year action. The delegates, many of whom are no strangers to problems and tragedies, fought back tears.

The delegates also donated more than $6,000 from an auction and raffle.

"The kind deeds you have shown the strikers is the very essence of what community services is to the labor movement," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney. "In disasters and tragedies all across the country, you have been there for all workers — union and nonunion."

In fact, ventriloquist Jan Goodwin of IMPACT demonstrated just how important community services is with a skit that dramatized the abilities of people with disabilities. The physically challenged may need assistance, but they do not want to be led, she told the audience.

The highest values of the labor movement are represented in community services, said AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. "It's generosity, it's a spirit of solidarity, it's idealism, it's a helping hand for those who need it."

Community services has meant all of those values and more to Habitat for Humanity, said David Williams, the program's senior vice president. "We have helped thousands of people because you have stepped forward to assist us," he told the delegates.

Pointing to 50 years of labor community services, Director Green Lewis reminded the delegates that they are "the heart of the labor movement. You have helped those in need, and your communities have come to know that they can depend on you when help is needed."

With news reports and public attention increasingly focused on the problem of child labor, delegates took their knowledge from a workshop on the subject to a nearby mall and held a consumer action. Other workshops included battling addiction, helping others on strike, disaster preparation and response and dealing with catastrophic illness.

The conference concluded with the Murray-Green-Meany-Kirkland Award Dinner honoring Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Unions reach out to women

Organizing, leadership top department goals

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The AFL-CIO's fledgling Working Women's Department is up and running full throttle in its mission to represent women and make their concerns a part of labor's agenda.

"The department will be injecting concerns of working women into every nook and cranny of the labor movement," said Karen Nussbaum, the department's director. "It's a very big mandate, but it's what we need to do. We will make sure that every major program and all departments do their work keeping working women in mind."

Organizing is a key priority of the department, said AFL-CIO Vice President Gloria Johnson, who was named by President John J. Sweeney to chair the Executive Council's Working Women's Committee.

Women currently comprise almost 40 percent of total union membership and are more than 60 percent of all service workers, the fastest-growing segment of new members. Studies show they also are more likely to join a union than men.

"We have made strides, but the majority of working women still don't belong to unions. Only about 16 percent of all working women belong to unions," said Johnson, who is president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women and vice president of the Electronic Workers.

"Unions have a moral responsibility to working women," Sweeney told the Institute for Women's Policy Research. "Because working women are desperately squeezed for time and money, they are urgently in need of union representation."

Representation of working women is very important for unions when one considers the numbers. The U.S. Census Bureau projects the number of male workers will increase by only 8 percent by 2005, while the number of female workers will increase 17 percent. These numbers are strikingly important to every aspect of unions' existence — organizing, political action and legislation, Nussbaum said.

The union advantage

No matter what color collar they wore, women who testified at the federation's "America Needs A Raise" town hall meetings said they experienced similar hardships in the workplace — sexism, low wages, temporary employment, sexual harassment and unequal pay.

But union women often stated in the meetings that they benefited from having a union contract and the support of their union when they faced these problems.

The union advantage extends also to pay. Female union members earn 38 percent more than their nonunion counterparts — and the advantage is even greater for women of color. In 1995, union African-American women earned an average of $473 weekly, compared with $325 for nonunion African-American women. Latino women represented by unions had median weekly earnings of $423, compared with $291 for nonunion Hispanic women.

Unions also narrow the wage gap between women and men from 32 percent for nonunion women to 25 percent for union women, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

"We've worked hard to reduce it and we're proud of the progress we've made so far, but we're not going to rest until the gap disappears," said AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

Female leaders needed

Another sign of progress is a growing representation of women in top union leadership positions. In 1979, when women made up 30 percent of the labor movement, there were no women on the AFL-CIO Executive Council and no female department directors or executive staff members. The next year, Joyce Miller of the Clothing and Textile Workers, now UNITE, became a member of the Executive Council and Dorothy Shields was named Education Director.

It took 40 years before the federation had its first female executive officer, Barbara Easterling of the Communications Workers, who served as secretary-treasurer for two months in 1995.

The 1995 AFL-CIO convention brought significant progress for women, including additional seats on the Executive Council. Today, in addition to Chavez-Thompson, there are six women on the council and nine female directors of AFL-CIO departments.

But the hard fact is that the movement is not nearly where it should be, Chavez-Thompson declared. "The challenge to unions is three-fold — transform the culture of unions, recruit more women leaders and establish more networks and relationships of union women helping union women."

Changing the culture in unions to provide more of those role models will be difficult, Chavez-Thompson said. "For example, many of my union brothers in the San Antonio Public Employees Council assumed I was the boss's secretary, even after I was business manager and ultimately executive director of the local unions."

More attention also has to be paid to developing and training new and young female workers, Johnson said. "We must help them understand it's more than paying dues, negotiating a contract and job security. It's an opportunity to stand with people in a common cause . . . and an opportunity to get involved. The local is only as strong as their involvement."

The department's other priorities include politics and outreach to all women, union and nonunion. "We are the biggest organization for women, and we intend to act like we are," Nussbaum said. That is particularly important this year, when "it will be working women's votes that determine the next election," she said.

The department also is putting together a network for women, which all union members are welcome to join, and will be issuing a quarterly newsletter and establishing a resource clearinghouse.

CLUW and the women's departments of affiliated unions also will work closely with the department.

Workers stop Oregon 'right to work'

Workers in Oregon thwarted a petition drive to place a public employee right-to-work measure on the November ballot.

Oregon Taxpayers United, headed by the anti-union lobbyist Bill Sizemore, filed more than 108,000 signatures, but only 86,000 were validated July 18 by the state's secretary of state — not enough to qualify for the ballot. The announcement "was a great moment for our campaign to block that," said David Gregory, the AFL-CIO regional director.

The ballot initiative would have prohibited the mandatory payment of union dues by public employees and banned the government from deducting union dues from employees' pay checks.

"Even with their purported budget of $672,000, Sizemore and his millionaire backers were unable to buy their way onto the ballot," Oregon AFL-CIO President Irv Fletcher said in a statement. "The Oregon public was able to see past the empty rhetoric and reject this attempt to tinker with the state constitution."

Sizemore's group also led the 1994 ballot initiative that required public employees to pay part of their pension. An appellate court overturned that measure last month. Sizemore said he would try again in 1998 to get the "right-to-work" measure on the ballot.

Gregory credited union solidarity with defeating the initiative, including early planning and funding by the state AFL-CIO, which raised per capita at its convention, as well as assistance from the national AFL-CIO beginning early this year.

Over the past few months, the AFL-CIO dispatched five additional staff members to assist in the campaign.

During one campaign activity — a July 2 rally at the state Capitol — more than 100 public employee union members brought the message home to legislators that Sizemore did not speak for them.

Oregon is among 29 "fair share" states that require dues payments by employees who work in a union shop — whether they join the union or not. The law is designed to prevent "free-riders," workers who benefit from union bargaining but do not pay dues.

"The message is clear," said Oregon Public Employees Union/SEIU Local 503 President Karla Spence. "Voters are fed up with Bill Sizemore's attacks on working Oregonians. The right-to-work initiative he circulated would have hurt more than public workers — it would have hurt families and communities throughout the state."

OPEU represents more than 22,000 public employees, and AFSCME represents 17,500 public employees in the state.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

AFL-CIO NEWS

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INSIDE



Michael Osborne/Colorado Labor Advocate

Central labor council officers explore innovation and activism in first national conference. **See story, Page 5.**

POLITICS

1 *Labor '96 building on legislative wins*

LEGISLATION

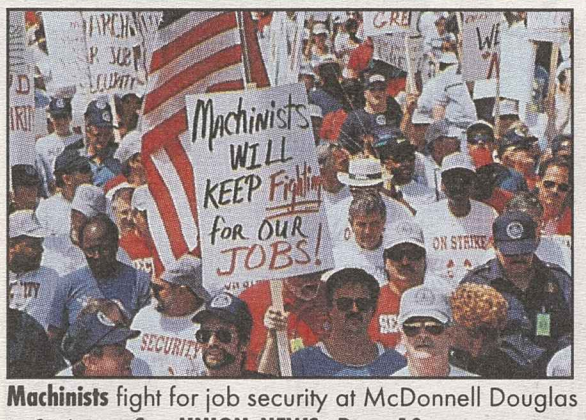
3 *TEAM Act killed; wage bill cleared*

UNION YES

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Machinists fight for job security at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis. **See UNION NEWS, Page 10.**

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 15 AUGUST 26, 1996

Workers get raise as campaign rolls on



Raymond Crowell/ Page One Photography

President Clinton signs the minimum wage increase, witnessed by workers and their families, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), Vice President Gore and Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich.

Minimum wage raise delivered by union drive

By Mike Hall

With two dozen minimum- and low-wage workers and their children looking on, President Clinton signed legislation giving America's lowest-paid workers a 90-cent-an-hour raise during an Aug. 20 ceremony on the White House South Lawn.

The AFL-CIO spearheaded the nationwide grass-roots drive that overcame deep-seated Republican hostility and all-out business opposition to the wage increase.

That grass-roots effort continues in full swing. Television and radio ads, press conferences and public events held over the August recess let voters know about GOP moves to raid pensions, slash education and strip hundreds of billions of dollars in vital state and county aid.

This followed up on earlier campaigns exposing GOP efforts to slash Medicare and Medicaid and block an increase in the minimum wage.

The AFL-CIO campaign to educate the public on the issues and mobilize members around those issues has the strong backing of union members, a new poll reveals, with 72 percent approving of television and radio ads. The survey was conducted Aug 2-4 by Peter D. Hart Research Associates.

Prior to the White House signing, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the workers and their children at the federation's headquarters, "Six months ago nobody agreed with us that we would have an increase in the minimum wage. It's the result of you and your unions pushing your members of Congress that brings us here today."

He also urged them "to remain active in your communities and your unions."

The first 45-cent increase in the minimum wage takes effect Oct. 1, boosting it from $4.25 to $4.70 an hour. The second 45-cent step takes place Sept. 1, 1997, bringing the minimum wage to $5.15.

Clinton thanked the labor movement for its efforts on behalf of the minimim wage increase, noting that "there are very few unions in America that have minimum wage workers. Most of these unions did this

Continued on Page 3

Labor '96 builds momentum

By Michael Byrne

Amid the hoopla of political conventions, that buzz you hear is union members from coast to coast massing for labor's ambitious drive to reclaim America for working families.

Labor '96 was in full swing months ahead of the traditional Labor Day political launch, with 135 full-time coordinators mobilizing union members in 84 congressional districts across the country. As Republicans gathered Aug. 11 for their convention in San Diego, the coordinators were mapping out get-out-the-vote strategies in a meeting with state federation officials and AFL-CIO staff.

When the Democrats bring down the gavel for their convention in Chicago Aug. 26, just as the nation's attention turns back to school, those coordinators will be back in their districts explaining how some members of Congress had voted to drastically reduce the student loan program.

The grass-roots activity keyed on student loans was accompanied by targeted television and radio advertisements on the issue, adding to the insistent "air war" volleys that have strafed anti-worker candidates throughout the year and raised the hackles of the extremist Republican leadership in Congress.

"The proof of the success we've been having so early in this campaign is the attacks that are being made against us — just because we have told the truth and just because we are mobilizing our membership," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the coordinators at the planning session held at the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies in Linthicum Heights, Md.

Continued on Page 5



David Bacon/Impact Visuals

Union Summer activists rally for striking workers at the Lafayette Hotel in San Francisco.

Union Summer bears fruit nationwide

By Muriel H. Cooper

Union Summer is ending spectacularly for the AFL-CIO and for the young activists who lent a powerful new voice to the struggle for justice across the country.

That voice, delivered in high volume and in theatrical performances, is being credited with gaining a first contract for workers at the plush Melrose Club resort in Hilton Head, S.C.

Other organizing campaigns made breakthroughs as a result of the energy infusion of Union Summer, but the most lasting impact may have come in the positive impressions made in communities across the country, and on the young people being exposed for the first time to the trials of working people.

"We wanted to send a strong message to young people as well as to all working people that the labor movement is a strong voice for economic justice," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the Executive Council in Chicago. "We have been very successful."

"This was one of the most concrete opportunities to do something to make the next generation of Americans overcome differences and diversity to unite and fight for justice at work," Andy Levin, director of the program, told the council.

The Melrose win perhaps best symbolized the purpose and the promise of the federation's nine-week campaign.

"We had three goals — to get a contract, to gather information to set up other campaigns in the area and to get young people excited abut the labor movement," said Simon Greer, site coordinator in Charleston. "And we did it."

Three waves of activists built on the two years of work done by the Operating Engineers and the "low country" community surrounding the resort area to force Melrose into contract negotiations. On Aug. 14, workers celebrated a two-year contract that includes comprehensive health care, job security, wage increases, a grievance procedure and arbitration.

"The Union Summer activists walked into a heated battle," said Greer. "Each wave stepped up the pressure, and just when it looked like Melrose was not

Continued on Page 15

ORGANIZING

UNITE scores two ways

UNITE will represent workers at FDR Services in Rome, Ga., following a highly successful card-check campaign, and workers at Dixie Kids in Fayetteville, N.C., after a representation election.

Ninety-five percent of the workers signed union cards at FDR, an industrial laundry that services hospitals. The workers will receive free health insurance, sick days and wage improvements in their first contract.

Poor working conditions, low wages and unaffordable health insurance prompted Dixie Kids workers to vote 76-62 for UNITE. "Dixie Kids workers have joined a growing trend among eastern North Carolina workers to organize in the traditionally anti-union part of the country," said Bruce Raynor, executive vice president and southern regional director of UNITE.



UNITE photo

Dixie Kids workers in Fayetteville, N.C., celebrate after voting for UNITE representation.

AFTRA puts $$ in cable

The Television and Radio Artists have earmarked $1.25 million to organize in the cable entertainment and news programming industry.

"We understand the size and complexity of this project," said Bruce York, AFTRA's national executive director. "The recent restructuring of AFTRA with the locals forming a closer relationship with the national makes financial commitments like this possible. Our governing boards and members have now provided the union with the resources to be successful in the new broadcast and entertainment world in which our members work."

AFTRA already has several cable contracts in place, including The Nashville Network, Home Box Office and E! Entertainment.

Triple-team works

The Machinists are seeing the benefits of their unification talks with the UAW and the Steelworkers as the three joined to beat back the anti-union campaign at Maremount Corp. in Loudon, Tenn. The workers voted 369-272 for the union.

"Here are the early fruits from our unification talks with the UAW and the Steelworkers," said Gary Will, IAM organizing director. "The UAW sent in four people to help in the campaign. They house-called, handbilled at the plant gates and went one-on-one with the workers."

Two UAW members from Maremount's sister plant in Alabama also were involved in organizing the workers.

Lucky seven for SEIU

Service Employees scored another series of victories at worksites across the country, including a 167-104 vote by nurses at Los Robles Hospital in California's San Fernando Valley. The win by Local 535 capped an organizing drive that was worker-led. The nurses paid union dues and built their organization for more than a year before filing for an election.

Local 236 in Chicago won card-check recognition for 180 ushers employed by Safety Service Systems. The ushers work at Soldiers Field, home of the Chicago Bears, Dyche Stadium, where the Northwestern Wildcats play, Rosemont Theatre and Rosemont Horizon.

A unit of 18 sterile supply technicians at the University of Illinois voted to join SEIU Local 73, while Local 1 won an election for 13 janitors at Prairie Court, a Chicago Housing Authority property.

Health care professionals at Peoples Community Care Residence (PCCR) in St. Paul, Minn., voted by a 2-1 margin for SEIU representation, and Local 1199IN organized a unit of 37 city-employed emergency medical service workers in Gary, Ind.

In Seattle, District 925 won an election for 27 patient account reps and other workers at Children's University Medical Group.

IBT wins new vote

After the National Labor Relations Board set aside their first election, employees of Fiber Sales and Development Corp. of Urbana, Ohio, voted by a 2-1 majority for Teamsters representation.

The NLRB determined that before the November 1995 election, the company had offered a reduction in employee-paid health care premiums in order to improperly influence the outcome of the election.

Fiber Sales is a subsidiary of the St. Louis-based Ralston Purina Co. The workers manufacture powdered cellulose for use as an additive in other products.

Volunteers boost win

With the help of District 7 volunteers, the Steelworkers won a 91-51 representation election at MEG Corp. in Cambridge City, Ind.

The volunteer organizers helped in house calls to more than half of the work force. In their discussions, the volunteers learned that the workers were seeking respect and dignity and better wages. About half of the MEG employees are women, and many complained of sexual discrimination.

The company manufactures metal shelving for businesses.

Kmart retail unit chooses UFCW

Meatcutters at a Super Kmart in Oakland, Calif., will be represented by the Food and Commercial Workers, which hailed the victory as a breakthrough against the anti-union company.

"It's a very important election because Kmart is nonunion all over America," said Charlie Fortenberry, UFCW Local 120 business agent.

Although the Teamsters and UNITE have organized Kmart warehouse operations, the Oakland meatcutters were the first retail unit to vote union. UFCW Local 870 said the election will help in the drive to unionize retail clerks at the store.

"It's going to help propel us to a win, hopefully," said John Nunes, Local 870 business agent. "The workers are real excited about it. We had a lot of confidence, too. It's going to help propel us."

A large number of the 550 retail workers in the Oakland store have signed union cards. The union petitioned the National Labor Relations Board for an election in late July, but it was postponed at the request of the company attorneys.

Kmart has reduced the work force at its Oakland store by half since it opened in November, a major reason that workers contacted the union. Workers also were harassed, accused of stealing and told to resign.

Oakland is "a strong labor town, and a lot of these workers came from union families, and they understand the importance of working under a union contract," said Nunes.

The UFCW has joined with several community groups "to bring to light a lot of this treatment at the store and the expectations of the workers," who were led to believe they had career opportunities.

The local has filed several unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB claiming that Kmart fired workers for union activities, and spied on and threatened the workers.

— Muriel H. Cooper

AFL-CIO NEWS

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Arizona AFL-CIO photo

An innovative event staged by grass-roots activists in Arizona portrayed Rep. J. D. Hayworth (R) steamrolling over the nation's fragile safety net of Medicare and Medicaid.

Labor's grass-roots campaign scores

Continued from Page 1

because they thought it was the right thing to do."

Clinton also signed the Kennedy-Kassebaum health portability bill, which Sweeney called a "step in the right direction" while noting the "serious and unmet need for broad health care reform."

The signings mark a high point in what has been a fruitful legislative season for America's working families — defeat of the company union TEAM Act and a national right-to-work-law and an easing of the GOP attack on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Labor Relations Board.

Labor's success despite a hostile, Republican-controlled Congress can be traced to the growing grass-roots involvement of working families. Angry at labor's victories, GOP leaders have attacked the AFL-CIO's efforts, using loaded questions and shoddy methodology to grandly announce that union members don't support the federation's efforts.

The new Hart poll paints a more accurate picture. It found that nearly three-quarters of union members say that their unions should either maintain their current level of involvement in political activity or should increase it.

Sixty-seven percent of the members have a positive reaction to the AFL-CIO's overall campaign — the media push plus grass-roots mobilizing and political organizing in congressional districts — to educate and inform members, with only 11 percent negative.

Contrary to Republican arguments that a significant minority of union members back GOP policies and object to the federation's campaign, only 17 percent of those surveyed said they would be more likely to support a candidate who has solidly backed Newt Gingrich's GOP agenda in Congress.

A solid majority of members support the way the AFL-CIO campaign is being funded. By 71-25 percent, members say they approve of using $1.80 from their regular dues on a one-time basis to inform union members about issues and elections.

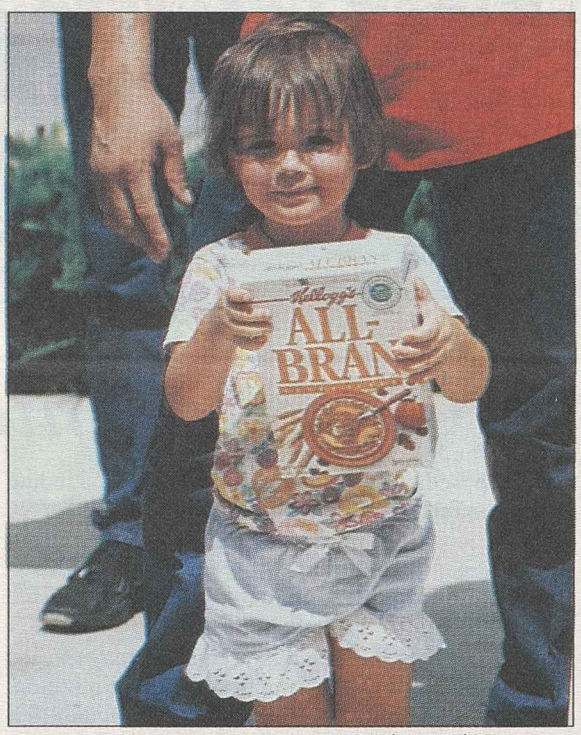
An Aug. 20 article in The Wall Street Journal confirms the AFL-CIO contention that GOP congressional leaders have launched a calculated anti-union campaign, in concert with business groups, to "get even" with unions for their mobilization efforts.

The article noted the $30 million the GOP is spending to attack the AFL-CIO's ads and their use of libel and regulatory threats against television stations in an attempt to keep the ads off the air, although few stations have done so.

Rep. John Boehner (R-Ohio) "prodded business lobbyists" to crank up their own multimillion-dollar counterpunch to the AFL-CIO, the article states.

"Wary of Federal Election Commission rules themselves, the GOP leaders deny coordinating their campaign with the business coalition. Some coalition members attend regular National Republican Congressional Committee briefings about which candidates need help," the Journal reported.

Meanwhile, in the field, a new series of ads highlighting targeted legislators' votes to slash millions from a vital student loan program will begin airing this week.



Jay Dunn/UAW Local 848 Aerospacer

A youngster holds her contribution to replenish Rep. Richard K. Armey's lost fiber after passage of the minimum wage bill. Trade unionists delivered 515 boxes of high-fiber cereal to Armey's Texas office.

Dozens of press conferences and events have been held in Labor '96 congressional districts since the beginning of the August recess, highlighting GOP stances on pension issues **(See story, this page)**, celebrating the minimum wage victory or outlining the devastating county-by-county impact of the GOP's proposed 1997 budget cuts.

In Irving, Texas, House Majority Leader Richard K. Armey (R) got a chance to eat some of his words. Armey had said last year, "I will fight the minimum wage increase with every fiber of my being."

Union members and minimum-wage workers presented him with 515 boxes — the minimum wage will rise to $5.15 an hour — of high fiber cereal. He did not invite the demonstrators in for breakfast.

Rep. Steven C. LaTourette (R-Ohio) was greeted by a group of mourners dressed in black carrying a casket at his annual golf fund-raiser.

The casket was covered with dead vines to represent the withering of such vital government programs as Medicare, Head Start, student loans and school lunches — all threatened by LaTourette's votes.

"His votes are against seniors, children, the disabled, college students and working families, so I guess the only people he really represents are the ones who can afford to take a day off work and pay for the privilege of playing golf with him," said Don Chadwick, a retired Paperworker and Labor '96 volunteer.

Pension raids highlighted in ads, events

New pension protection measure pending in House

By Colleen M. O'Neill

You work hard all your life — an honest day's work for an honest day's pay and the promise of secure income when your working days are through.

Edith Thomson knows that promise is easily broken by ruthless employers because — after giving 41 years of her life to Carter-Hawley-Hale Stores Inc. — her 401(k) money vanished when the company went bankrupt.

Her story is featured in radio and television ads the AFL-CIO ran during the August congressional recess. Thomson's company had invested its workers' 401(k) funds in its own stock, so that "when they went broke, they had used my retirement money already, so there was nothing left," she said.

She lost more than $87,000.

The federation's ads pointed out that Congress has considered pension issues several times over the last two years, and urged legislators to tighten 401(k) rules and oppose allowing company CEOs to gain control of workers' "excess" pension funds.

Grass-roots activists drove the point home with picnics, press conferences, leafleting, picketing and the like.

In North Carolina, for example, a Teamsters member participated in a forum at a church along with an AARP member and representatives of Citizen Action. In Idaho, a press conference at the Boise Senior Center garnered coverage from all the local media, who then befuddled GOP Rep. Helen Chenoweth's staff looking for a response.

Leafleters were out in full force in Gloucester, Mass., while Thomson herself participated in an event in Eureka, Calif.

The latest round of well-founded worker anxiety over pension security can be traced to the serious consideration given a proposal on Capitol Hill last year to allow employers to take out of their workers' pension funds that amount deemed an "overage" — and to spend this money at will.

Legislation was passed in 1990 to clamp down on such free spending by corporate officers of workers' money — but GOP lawmakers saw a chance to unfund workers and give the funds to their Big Business friends. The so-called pension raid of 1995 was slipped into the GOP budget reconciliation bill, but it was vetoed by President Clinton.

Anxiety over pension funds remains strong, giving rise to new pension protection legislation. One such proposal — H.R. 3688 — would have saved Edith Thomson's money. It would put employees' 401(k) funds further away from employers by subjecting 401(k) plans to the same rules that govern pensions, such as a 10 percent restriction on employer-related real estate and securities.

Currently, some 20 percent of 401(k) retirement plans are managed by companies, meaning the money is in the hands of the employer, not the workers. A disturbing number of those businesses are straying into risky investments with workers' and retirees' funds.

Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich also took on the issue of pensions during the August recess, announcing tighter standards on deposits of 401(k) money into accounts. Employers currently have 90 days to deposit funds in workers' accounts; under new rules announced in early August, employers will have 15 business days after the end of the month to square their books.

Reich said his department had found employers using the three-month grace period as a kind of automatic float, from which they would benefit from interest. The DoL estimates that will give American workers an extra $76 million in interest in 1997.

The rule goes into affect in six months — later for union members with existing contracts.

Privatization patter roils Social Security pot

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Politicians bent on privatizing government services have turned their attention to Social Security, but workers and their unions will have none of it.

Calling Social Security "perhaps the federal government's most successful social policy achievement," the AFL-CIO Executive Council vowed to fight efforts to abandon the program for individual savings accounts.

The 61-year-old program currently provides some 43 million Americans with an average yearly benefit of $7,700 under the old-age, survivors and disability social insurance programs that make up Social Security — with enough left over for a Trust Fund reserve of nearly $500 billion.

Periodic adjustments have been required to keep up the benefits funding — higher payroll taxes and retirement ages — and Social Security currently is able to meet its obligations well into the next century. But rumblings over its longer-term viability have opened the door to the threat of privatization.

Several measures pending in Congress, including one by Sens. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) and Bob Kerrey (D-Neb.), would replace Social Security with individual, private savings accounts that would rely in some fashion on the stock market to generate retirement income.

"The AFL-CIO rejects all attempts to dismantle the Social Security system and to exaggerate the extent of its long-term financing problems," the council declared at its summer meeting in Chicago, assailing "the disinformation campaign currently being waged by Wall Street interests" seeking a share of privately run accounts functioning in place of Social Security.

The federation called on all unions to join with allied groups "in a coordinated campaign to educate Americans on the true value of Social Security and to discredit the false notion that private retirement accounts could match Social Security benefits."

The AFL-CIO pointed out that the Social Security system's benefit structure returns a higher share of low-paid workers' earnings in the form of benefits, but also pays higher benefits to higher contributors.

Social Security's costs "are less than 0.7 percent of annual benefits," the federation noted, "compared with administrative costs at private insurance companies that are, on average, 40 percent higher."

Unions were urged to include regular communication on Social Security in their publications, use educational material being developed by allied organizations and to encourage local leaders and activists to speak out publicly.

With $500 billion in the trust fund, Social Security is not in danger yet. In developing a prudent response to the trust fund's long-term financing needs, "the AFL-CIO will work to ensure that all Americans will be able to continue to rely upon Social Security."

OSHA targets worker safety at nursing homes

Nursing home workers will gain greater safety provided a recently announced safety and health initiative does the job.

Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich acted Aug. 8 in the face of mounting injuries and illnesses among workers at these facilities.

Under the initiative, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration will conduct free, comprehensive seminars beginning this fall in Pennsylvania, New York, Missouri, Ohio, Illinois, Florida and Massachusetts, with the goal of helping employers develop safety and health programs, identify and prevent injuries and illnesses related to bloodborne pathogens, tuberculosis and handling of residents, as well as prevent workplace violence.

Those seven states all have more than 500 nursing home facilities.

Nursing home workers suffered more than 221,000 nonfatal injuries in 1994 — making the industry more dangerous than construction, mining, electrical work and automobile repair, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

The number of lost workdays per 100 full-time nursing home workers increased from 98.2 in 1983 to 186.9 in 1993, according to the Service Employees.

The goal of the new program, Labor officials say, is to disseminate information, give employers a chance to make changes, gather workers' compensation data and then focus on those companies with the highest rates of injury. The ultimate focus is training for prevention of injuries and illnesses, officials said.

"Nursing home work is one of the most dangerous jobs in America," SEIU President Andrew L. Stern said. "Nearly one in five nursing home workers will be injured on the job this year. This initiative is a giant step forward in the fight to curb those injuries so that workers can safely provide the best possible care for their elderly patients."

SEIU and the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging are to assist OSHA in the outreach effort. SEIU issued a report in 1995 on nursing home safety for employees titled "Caring Till It Hurts."

— Colleen M. O'Neill



LIUNA photo

Workers and their allies "March for Justice" at Case Farms in Morganton, N.C.

N.C. strikers hungry for justice

Hundreds of workers and their allies, including Union Summer activists from Hilton Head, S.C., joined a "March for Justice" organized by religious leaders in support of 450 striking Laborers at Case Farms in Morganton, N.C.

The workers walked out of the poultry processing plant in mid-August after the company refused to recognize or bargain with LIUNA. In addition, two of the strikers — Luis Alberto Gonzalez and Roberto Mendoza — began a hunger strike, to "Fast and Pray for Justice," outside of the plant.

The workers voted for the union last year after documenting numerous incidents of abuse and exploitation by plant managers. Since the election, the company has fired 38 workers for union activity.

The National Labor Relations Board overruled Case Farms' objections and ordered the company to bargain with the workers.

"These workers are striving to provide decent lives for themselves and their families through hard work and personal sacrifice," said LIUNA President Arthur A. Coia. "They, like so many of our ancestors, came to this country in search of liberty and justice. The management at Case Farms has done everything in their power to keep these workers from achieving these noble ends."

In July, almost one-third of the workers walked out to protest the illegal firing of one worker dumped when he protested the increased speed of the chicken carcass production line. The worker was rehired and the strikers returned to work.

The National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice reported terrible conditions after a late-April fact-finding visit to Case Farms. "We work eight-hour shifts with only one bathroom break," said Francisco Ramirez. "My co-worker was forced to continue working even when his wrist swelled up to the size of a grapefruit because of repetitive stress/carpal tunnel syndrome," he said.

"I hunger for justice," said Gonzalez. "I am prepared to starve myself until Case Farms will sit down and bargain with us. I will not let the company treat us with such disrespect and injustice."

Setting the stage for the Aug. 17 march, hundreds of New York City building trades workers held a rally on Wall Street in front of the Bank of New York — Case Farms' primary commercial lender — urging the bank to stop financing the company's abusive and illegal practices.

— Muriel H. Cooper

Tighter rules sought to prevent workplace violence at night

While commending the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for proposing guidelines for late-night workplace violence prevention programs, unions are urging that the guidelines be broadened.

"There is no definition of what constitutes night," the Inter-Union Workplace Physical Violence Coalition wrote, expressing concern that only those stores open 24 hours may implement preventive programs, while those open after dark, even until 11 p.m., will not consider themselves night establishments.

In another comment, Food and Commercial Workers Local 770 detailed several incidents that occurred during morning hours in retail supermarkets. The union recommended that the title be changed to "guidelines for the retail industry, with a special emphasis on night retail establishments."

The goal of the guidelines is to eliminate or reduce conditions that raise retail workers' chances of death or injury. The guidelines are to provide employers with specific options that could be taken to protect workers employed after dark.

The numbers substantiate the urgency. About 1 million workers are assaulted and more than 1,000 workers are murdered annually as a result of workplace violence, according to a report released last month by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

NIOSH data indicate that homicide is the second-leading cause of occupational death, surpassed only by motor vehicle-related deaths. Workplace homicides increased in the 1990s after decreasing significantly in the 1980s, the report said.

The greatest number of deaths during the period 1980-1992 occurred in the retail industry, followed by public administration.

Unions are concerned about the "voluntary" nature of the guidelines, urging the agency to make them mandatory.

Other suggestions from the unions included greater worker involvement, hazard prevention, training and telephone access. Comments submitted by the AFL-CIO request that telephone access for workers be included among the recommended engineering controls.

The deadline for comments has been extended to Sept. 30.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

Economics education puts workers in equation

By David Kameras

The AFL-CIO is mounting an unprecedented economics education program for union members.

The program is being field-tested as a basic part of the federation's massive member mobilization campaign this election year, and it will become an essential part of union educational programs in the years to come.

"This is a significant step in labor education as a whole," said Robert Pleasure, President John J. Sweeney's assistant for education, at the Executive Council meeting in Chicago. "For the labor movement to achieve its organizing, political, legislative and collective bargaining goals, we need to deepen members' understanding of the economic context of their union and community activity."

He described the initial phase in which the program, as a corollary to Labor '96, is educating members in political campaigns and educating candidates about the needs and challenges facing working Americans.

"But I think this program goes far beyond the political process in the months ahead," Pleasure said. "It proposes an economic education program that's integrated with organizing and bargaining, job training, apprenticeship training and worker counseling."

The program is being developed with input from the education and research departments of all the affiliated unions. It will be a primary emphasis of the AFL-CIO Education Department and its new director, Bill Fletcher, a former education and field staff director at the Service Employees who was introduced to the council by Sweeney.

Field-tested during the election-year mobilization, the program will continue to make the case for stronger unions in the years to come.

"We have a great opportunity," Fletcher told the council. "We need to change things around dramatically in the way workers view unions and the way that unions influence policy. There is a certain level of urgency."

The council also heard from Jeff Faux, president of the Economic Policy Institute, on the need to extend the workers' perspective onto the national scene.

"We need to make the economic case so that more people understand the importance of unions," Faux said, noting the prevailing myth that high wages are bad for the country. "What we need to do is create the kind of movement that addresses and attacks that story," he said. "Unless we do that, the chance of getting labor law reform is very low."

Faux spoke about creating an army of people who understand the key economic facts, such as the need to create a strong demand for labor. "There should be a hunger to understand what the hell is going on, to understand it in the context of coming in, turning on the TV and hearing only stock market news, not paycheck news. We need to make people understand there is something in this for them."

To amplify labor's message, Faux talked of creating an "echo chamber," in which the workers' perspective is reinforced through different media. "When Gingrich speaks, Limbaugh echoes, and then letters to the editors with the same arguments come in," he said. "We need to create our own echo chamber."

Phase 1 of the economic education plan has the federation developing and distributing economic education curricula and materials to apprenticeship programs, joint labor-management education and training programs, counselors for displaced workers and community teach-ins. These activities are coordinated with affiliated unions, training programs, university-based labor centers and community groups.

After the November election, the AFL-CIO will move forward with a multiyear, multilevel program stressing the need for collective action through stronger, growing unions to achieve a restructured economy that serves working families better. It is hoped the first programs of Phase 2 will be field-tested in early 1997.

The outline also envisions a permanent national network of trained labor educators and economists, regular follow-up with program participants, debriefings to culminate in a seminar and workshop for union leaders, a permanent clearinghouse on economics education and systematic, comprehensive and continuing evaluations.

"This is a long-term process that will require investment and leadership to signal to the rank and file that this is important," Faux said.

Stakes are high in mobilization beyond election

Continued from Page 1

"But we can't be overconfident," Sweeney said. "The crucial part of your agenda is how the end-game will be played out. We have to go all out. There's too much at stake."

The stakes were raised even higher at the Republican convention, where delegates approved a party platform that embraced the company-union TEAM Act, called for the relaxation of labor laws, including the Davis-Bacon and Service Contract acts, as well as the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. It criticized teachers' unions, called for the privatization of government services and endorsed state "right-to-work" laws.

The convention also nominated Bob Dole, who has unveiled a tax-cut proposal that would mostly benefit the wealthy while requiring massive cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, health and safety and other programs that serve working families.

"Working families have heard these promises before, and won't be fooled again," the AFL-CIO Executive Council said during its summer meeting in Chicago, pointing to the same kind of supply-side tax cuts in the '80s that had ballooned the deficit. Dole's supply-side cuts "will only serve to widen the already obscene gap between rich and poor," it said.

Working families are expecting to get a better hearing at the Democratic convention, where more than 800 delegates are members of AFL-CIO unions. Combined with delegates from the unaffiliated National Education Association, union delegates constitute one-quarter of the total.

The Democratic Party platform draft embraces workers' rights to form unions and to bargain collectively, and rejects right to work and the TEAM Act. It also opposes efforts to gut the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Labor Relations Board.

Still, "some forces within the Democratic Party would shrink from the commitment to make the economy work for working Americans," the AFL-CIO's top officers said in a statement that pointed to the issues that have cemented a traditional alliance between the labor movement and the Democrats.

"In the face of the harsh new global economy, (anti-worker forces) would minimize, not modernize, the institutions that offer working people a measure of security — an active national government, a social safety net and strong unions."

The statement by Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson called upon the Democrats to:

- Help working families share in the gains of a growing economy.
- Reaffirm their belief that working people must have an independent voice on their jobs and be partners with their employers, enjoying a share of the benefit of their efforts to make their companies vital and productive.
- Demand that corporate America show some responsibility to our communities and our country.
- Advance the idea that jobs must come with living wages, health care, training opportunities and secure pensions.
- Support social policies that lift the most vulnerable into jobs, instead of abandoning them and their children.

The AFL-CIO "enthusiastically supports the re-election of President Clinton and the return of a Democratic Congress," the executive officers said. "We agree with President Clinton that his economic accomplishments are 'a record to build on, not rest on.' Too many working families have not yet benefited from economic gains."

The statement also pointed out that Labor '96 "is independent of the major parties. It's about empowering working families — not electing Democrats or Republicans."

Sweeney reiterated that point in his address to the coordinators at their planning session. "We will not measure our success by the numbers of this election, but by our ability to talk to and motivate our membership," he said. "This is about the future of the labor movement."

Brenda Wood, who is coordinating Labor '96 efforts in two Washington state congressional districts, said her work is concentrated on "involving the membership. We are talking about political issues, but we are really involved in internal organizing. We are building our unions."

Indeed, the goal of Labor '96 is to create a permanent grass-roots structure in every congressional district that will allow working families to hold office-holders accountable for their actions. District coordinators are building that network by enlisting new volunteers, aiming at a core of 10,000 activists working to get out the vote this year.

Those volunteers will be reaching out to union members throughout September and October, explaining the issues in the campaign and urging them to vote for candidates who will stand with them and their families.



Donna Binder/Impact Visuals

Workers cheer AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney at a rally in San Diego the day before the Republican convention opened. The Labor '96 mobilization is centered around such key worker issues as fair wages, job security, pensions and health care.

Strategic campaign structure, leadership in place

Corporate affairs helps unions with employers

By James B. Parks

Making good on the promise to revamp and revitalize the ability of unions to mount successful strategic campaigns for organizing and collective bargaining, the AFL-CIO began assembling the team that will provide direct help to unions in their dealings with employers.

President John J. Sweeney drew on some of the top talents in the labor movement to fill key roles in the new Corporate Affairs Department, which will provide information and analysis for corporate campaigns, and the Field Mobilization Department, which will coordinate field activities.

Ron Blackwell, UNITE's chief economist, will become director of corporate affairs. The department will include three divisions — Strategic Research, headed by David Chu, former Service Employees research director; Employee Ownership and Governance, headed by William Patterson, who has directed shareholder campaigns for the Teamsters; and Workplace Democracy, with Nancy Mills, who previously worked on issues of the changing workplace at SEIU, serving as acting director.

Dick Leonard, corporate campaign director for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, will direct strategic campaigns as an assistant director in the Department of Field Mobilization.

"This is an impressive array of talent to focus on the critical issues facing America's working families," Sweeney said. "It continues the exciting headway we have already begun with the creation and revamping of our activities in organizing, government affairs, public affairs, working women's issues, field mobilization and legal services."

The appointments, coupled with the reorganization of the various field staffs, will "provide affiliates with the best possible talent" for the difficult work of strategic campaigns, Sweeney said.

The recent rail settlement shows how effective coordinated actions can be, several union presidents said.

The active support given by Sweeney and Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, including Sweeney's appearance before the rail emergency board, the first-ever by an AFL-CIO president, helped turn the tide in favor of rail workers, said Transportation Communications Union President Robert A. Scardelletti.

"We needed the AFL-CIO and they were there to help. In the end, we reached an agreement that far exceeded what the industry dreamed they would be paying and anything we thought we could achieve," he said.

"The railroads were going through Congress to force a settlement," Maintenance of Way Employees President Mac Fleming said. "But we politicized the process by bringing the AFL-CIO into it. We had more votes than they did. It meant a lot in the end: substantial job security, skill differential, enhanced work rules."

The campaign staff will have its hands full as soon as it hits the ground. Trumka, who heads the Strategic Approaches Committee, told the Executive Council his panel has been extremely busy.

Coming off victories in the rail talks and in the Paperworkers' strike against Trailmobile, the committee has intensified its efforts in other ongoing disputes.

In the Detroit newspaper strike, Sweeney told strikers last month that the federation would "raise the visibility (of the strike) and bring this to a successful conclusion."

Both sides have agreed to resume negotiations at the request of the mayor, Trumka said. But the newspaper owners, Gannett and Knight-Ridder, have refused to negotiate around the clock, opting instead for only two dates so far.

The strike, which has gone on for 13 months, "is being sustained against incredible odds," but solidarity is high, Trumka said. Among the strongest supporters has been the UAW, which recently presented $150 checks to each of the nearly 2,000 strikers for the fourth time since the strike began. The federation also has assigned two additional staff, George Curtin and Gary Horton, bringing to six the number of personnel assigned to aid the strikers.

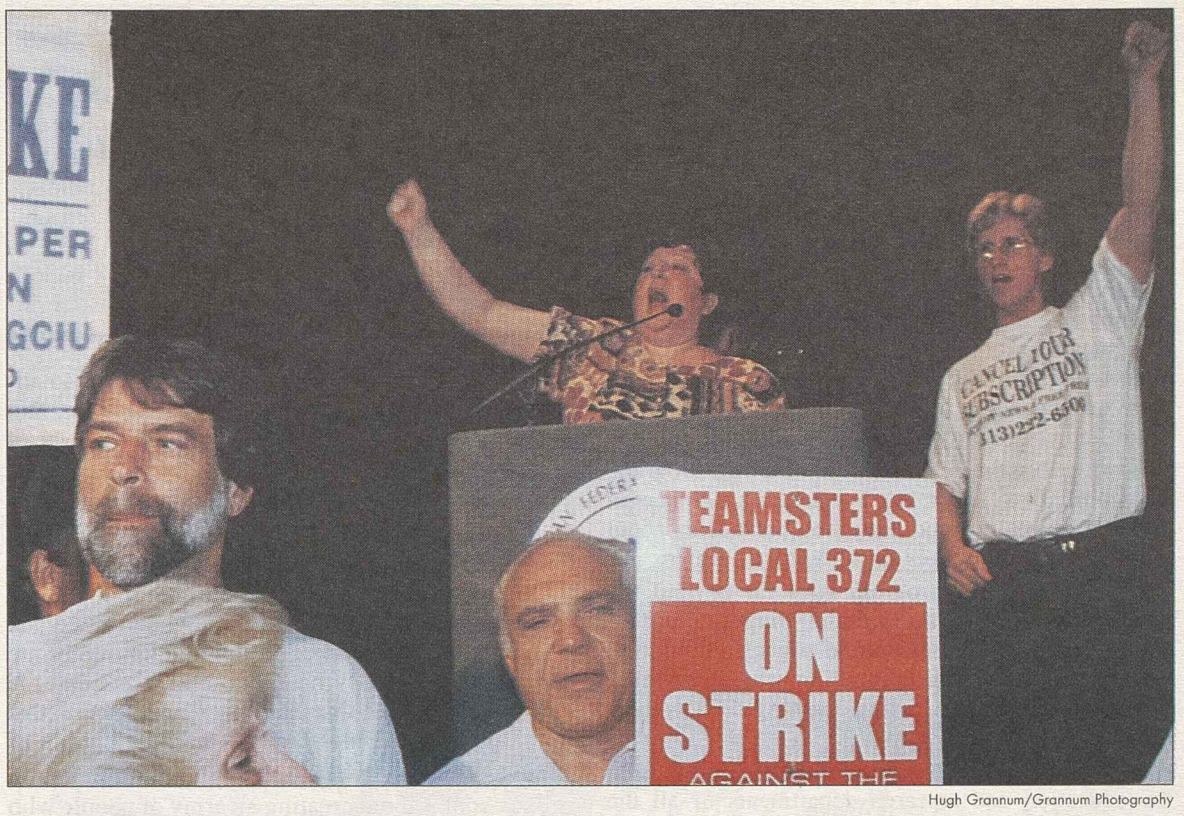
The strikers were disappointed that Gannett board member and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, responding to a letter, would not even agree to meet with them to discuss their concerns. "If Sadat and Begin had taken this approach, there never would have been a Carter Center," Trumka said, referring to the historic talks between the Egyptian president and Israeli prime minister that led to a peace accord brokered by then-President Jimmy Carter.

Some 2,000 employees of the Detroit News and Free Press have been on strike since July 13, 1995, after negotiations failed to produce a new agreement. Management and imported scabs from other papers are producing the newspapers.

The key issue is how to get rid of the scabs, Communications Workers President Morton Bahr said. The CWA and The Newspaper Guild-CWA are two of the striking unions, along with IBT and Graphic Communications.

GCIU President James J. Norton announced that retail giant Dayton Hudson has pulled out of the Detroit scab newspapers and will advertise in the suburban papers. It also has cut its Christmas budget with the papers by $20 million, he said.

The strike at the Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas is in its fifth year and is still going strong — not one striker has crossed the picket line, Trumka reported. As a result, the hotel is losing out on the boom on the Strip, which is based on a "labor-management partnership that the Frontier is not participating in," he said.



Hugh Grannum/Grannum Photography

Community Services representatives Nancy McCormick and Eric Lindemier lead chants in support of striking Detroit newspaper workers at the department's annual conference in Dearborn, Mich.

International focus shifts to organizing, solidarity

The AFL-CIO is forging ahead with an activist international affairs program focused on organizing, educating members and building a strong global union movement.

The federation's International Affairs Committee, chaired by Machinists President George J. Kourpias, presented preliminary recommendations to the Executive Council for a restructuring of the federation's international activities "to supplement the overall goals of the affiliates and the federation to organize and strengthen bargaining at home and abroad."

The recommendations reflect the activist approach described by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney at the World Congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in June. "We must do more than talk to each other, pass fine resolutions and go home," Sweeney said. "We must create clear and measurable goals and design campaigns to accomplish them."

"Our labor movements need to engage in a seamless garment of activism," Sweeney told the Trade Union Congress in London. "We need to organize members in every occupation and every industry. That is the only way we can gain the economic power to win better wages and benefits at the bargaining table. That is the only way that we can gain the political power to enact better laws to protect working people's rights to organize unions and bargain with their employers."

Sweeney announced at the council meeting that he has appointed Barbara Shailor, IAM's international affairs director, to lead the refocused international affairs program. She replaces Charles Gray, who will become Sweeney's assistant for international relations, particularly on the International Labor Organization, where Gray has played a prominent role for many years.

"The recommendations are consistent with other changes at the AFL-CIO — taking an activist approach to issues, much as the Organizing and Field Mobilization departments are doing," Shailor said.

The department also will take an activist approach to educating union members on the international issues and how they affect American workers, Shailor said. She cited IAM's strikes at Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, both over the issue of outsourcing to foreign companies, as examples of the impact of global competition.

"To succeed in our struggle, union members in every country must develop a better understanding of how global forces impact their national governments, their industries, their unions and their place of work," Kourpias told the council.

As part of the restructuring, the four federation international institutes will be combined into the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS) by the end of the year.

Jim Baker, executive assistant to former President Lane Kirkland, is overseeing the integration of the institutes.

The committee recommended that ACILS be funded without government supervision, foreign or domestic. Currently, much of the money that funds the institutes comes from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the National Endowment for Democracy.

Funds for both agencies have been cut significantly by Congress. The report also called for focusing the efforts of the institutes on the organization and development of strong and independent trade unions at home and abroad.

In addition, the report called for the IAD to cooperate and coordinate with affiliates and the Corporate Affairs, Public Policy and Field Mobilization departments by strengthening U.S. participation in the ICFTU, international trade secretariats and expanding affiliation with Asian organizations. It also called for a strategic political campaign to ratify ILO conventions on the right to organize and bargain collectively.

— James B. Parks

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

State feds to capture fees

The Executive Council adopted a statement authorizing a disbursement schedule to state federations of the monies generated by the 1-cent penalty per capita program on state federation affiliation.

The sliding scale disbursement calls for the largest allocations to go to small- and medium-sized state federations. Also, up to 10 percent of the funds may be disbursed as grants of no more than $5,000 for such needs as affiliation initiatives, technological enhancements or grass-roots development.

The council also expanded AFL-CIO authority over all "election protests" in state and local central bodies and shifted the first appeal by a central body on matters regarding disciplinary action from the council to the Appeals Committee.

In addition, protest of an officer's election may be made to the AFL-CIO president within 30 days of exhaustion of any applicable procedures provided by the constitution or bylaws of the state or local central body.

Dispute procedures changed

The council approved a series of changes in the articles of the AFL-CIO constitution that deal with union dispute settlement.

A set of new procedures for handling complaints under Article XX were issued, including a requirement that unions contact each other before taking the complaint to the federation.

The council also amended Article XX to allow independent unions to affiliate with an AFL-CIO affiliate even if another union has filed a petition with a labor board to represent the workers in that unit. That amendment has been approved each year since 1992 on a trial basis.

In addition, the Article XX Review Committee was renamed the Committee on Article XX and Article XXI Review.

Not officially English

English is already our "common" language, the council declared, and therefore does not have to be our official language, as espoused in a legislative proposal, H.R. 123.

The council noted that the measure would "disenfranchise, divide and disconnect millions of Americans from their government," and urged "expanding public funding for adult education programs and English as a second language because isolating immigrants and American-born citizens who are not fluent in English leads to exploitation and discrimination."

Church burnings decried

The outbreak of burnings, bombings and vandalism recently visited on American churches was condemned by the AFL-CIO, which vowed to mobilize against the forces of intolerance and bigotry.

"We will work with groups from different faiths and with our allies in civil and human rights organizations to help open an honest dialogue within the communities where these crimes have occurred," the council said in a statement, "and we will work to help rebuild and restore the houses of worship that have been vandalized by these hate criminals."

New boycott strategy

To strengthen the AFL-CIO boycott endorsement policy, the federation will list companies only for a period of up to one calendar year, at which time it would expire automatically.

Before a company is listed, the national officers of the union seeking the boycott must meet with AFL-CIO executive officers or staff to discuss a strategic plan and timetable for the boycott.

Stern replaces Cordtz

The council praised retiring Vice President Richard W. Cordtz, who was replaced on the council by the new president of the Service Employees, Andy Stern.

Cordtz had been a member of the council since October 1995, when he was elected to the SEIU presidency, succeeding John J. Sweeney.

"His commitment to organizing over his 50 years of service to working people is a standard we hold forth to union activists and leaders of generations to come," the council said in a statement.



Dennis Corvin-Blackburn/AFSCME

Veterans' home workers in Anna, Ill., set up a picket line Aug. 10 after they walked off the job because of unfair treatment by ServiceMaster, which offers low pay and few benefits, compared with state-run homes.

Strike spotlights disServiceMaster

Private veterans' home shafts workers, taxpayers

Workers at the state veterans' home in Anna, Ill., struck Aug. 10 after a yearlong struggle under the AFSCME banner for a first contract with ServiceMaster.

The ServiceMaster home is one of four veterans' homes in Illinois financed by the state. Unionized workers at the three state-operated homes in LaSalle, Manteno and Quincy have health insurance, pensions and earn $9.60 an hour, while certified nursing assistants at the privately run Anna facility earn only $4.67 an hour with no health insurance or pensions and very minimal benefits.

According to AFSCME, ServiceMaster's contract with the state is worth nearly $2 million; yet, the company spends less than half of the employment costs at the other facilities. Given that their overall costs are only 12 percent to 28 percent less than at the state-operated homes, the union concludes that "ServiceMaster is making big profits from the veterans' home, and those profits are coming at the expense of the veterans, the employees and the entire Anna community."

The federation took up the cause of the workers before the strike began with a statement in support of their efforts.

"The AFL-CIO Executive Council condemns the refusal of ServiceMaster to bargain in good faith with the workers at the Anna veterans' home. We call on the State of Illinois to take steps immediately to bring about a fair settlement with these workers, and if ServiceMaster refuses to bargain, to cancel its contract with the company."

Several days into the strike, family members of residents had reported that some replacement workers were not showing up — and those that did report to work lacked qualifications and necessary skills and were administering poor care.

Specifically, clinical tests were done late or not at all, meals arrived late and cold, residents had to tell the replacement workers how to perform lifts properly and residents without family nearby were not having their appearances tended to.

Those allegations led former GOP State Senator Ralph Dunn to urge Gov. Jim Edgar to terminate ServiceMaster's contract.

He said the treatment of the residents by the unqualified replacement workers had made the home "a symbol, not of our common commitment to these veterans, but of the State of Illinois' indifference to their physical and mental well-being."

No new bargaining sessions were set until after Labor Day.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

Unions fight Bell Atlantic-NYNEX hookup

Breaking up was hard to do, Ma Bell's offspring say. Now the regional operating companies are seeking new ways to come together.

For telephone customers from Boston to Washington, that means a planned merger of NYNEX and Bell Atlantic. And for Electrical Workers and Communications Workers employed by the two companies, that means trouble.

"We have seen a preview, in the mobile phone operation, of what we'll see when they merge," said CWA spokesman Jeffrey Miller. "They turned into a bunch of union busters."

The AFL-CIO joined its two affiliates in fighting the merger with a statement of support issued at the Executive Council meeting in Chicago.

"It is clear that Bell Atlantic's buyout of NYNEX would take us in the opposite direction (from the goal of the 1996 Telecommunications Act): a bigger telecom monopoly with even less incentive to reverse the companies' existing pattern of declining service standards, ever-higher rates and the destruction of good jobs," the council said.

The original merger plans were changed so as to sidestep scrutiny, CWA President Morton Bahr asserted, noting that "in every action it takes, this company shows its arrogance and disregard for workers, from the six-month fight for a new contract last year to the end run it's trying to make around public oversight of the proposed merger."

State regulators in the New England and mid-Atlantic states must approve the merger; the unions have vowed to fight it there and in the courts.

IBEW President John J. Barry said the merging of the cellular operations last year gave the firms the chance to show how they would deal with their work force. However, Bell Atlantic threw out the negotiated union contracts and so far has refused to abide by a National Labor Relations Board determination that its action was illegal.

"Bell Atlantic continues to show its contempt for workers, through its refusal to acknowledge the contracts fairly negotiated at the mobile operation; by issuing a union-busting guide to supervisors; and by denying workers transfer rights into new jobs," Barry said.

The council said "both companies have allowed service standards to deteriorate, while steadily downsizing their work forces and funneling these savings into sideline business ventures instead of maintaining or improving their telecom systems." It pledged full support to the unions in seeking to block the alliance, and called on "all federal and state agencies charged with reviewing the proposed deal to withhold approval."

Bell Atlantic-NYNEX Mobile remains on the AFL-CIO's national boycott list.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

COURTS

UPS can't dodge NLRB

Ruling in favor of the Teamsters, a federal appeals court decided that United Parcel Service Inc. is subject to the National Labor Relations Act, as it has been for the last 47 years.

The company had sought to bring itself under the Railway Labor Act, which covers airlines and railroads, and the National Mediation Board, which administers that law, instead of the NLRA and the National Labor Relations Board.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that UPS, with 300,000 employees, mainly performs ground transportation for small packages. Its subsidiary, United Parcel Service Co., with 3,000 employees, was created in 1988 to deliver air freight and is subject to the RLA.

The case, UPS Inc. vs. NLRB, arose in 1993 when the company was charged with violating labor laws by the IBT. While the case was before the NLRB, the company requested the board to ask the NMB whether it should be covered by the railway act. After an administrative law judge ruled in UPS' favor, the NLRB reversed the decision.

Coke contract upheld

A federal appeals court upheld the primacy of the collective bargaining contract over work rules and ordered a Coca-Cola employee reinstated after he was fired for being late to work too often.

An arbitrator had decided in favor of the employee in the case, Midwest Coca-Cola vs. Teamsters Local 792. Coca-Cola argued that its work rules on tardiness superseded the collective bargaining agreement, but the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit rejected the argument, overruled a lower court and upheld the arbitrator's decision.

Coca-Cola work rules require discharge for workers who are late four times in a 12-month period without calling in 30 minutes before the shift begins. But the contract prohibits the firing of a senior employee without "just cause," and calls for an arbitrator to determine if such cause existed and to order reinstatement if necessary.

"The fact that we, the district court, or Coca-Cola may disagree with the arbitrator's arguable interpretation of the agreement is of no consequence, because Coca-Cola and the union bargained for the arbitrator's interpretation," the court wrote.

Hospital injunction denied

A federal judge has denied the National Labor Relations Board's request for an injunction to force a Kentucky medical center to bargain with a union over a restructuring of nurses' positions and duties.

U.S. District Judge John G. Heyburn of western Kentucky ruled that the NLRB failed to show that an injunction was justified and it would be too burdensome to renegotiate the restructuring, which was completed in February.

The case, Ahearn vs. Audubon Regional Medical Center, began when Audubon in 1995 unilaterally changed the staffing levels for nurses and redesigned the physical layout without consulting the union. No nurses were laid off or terminated because of the changes.

The Nurses Professional Organization, an affiliate of AFSCME, filed unfair labor practice charges in 1994 against Audubon, an acute care facility with 2,000 employees, including 642 registered nurses. The union claimed the facility threatened employees during a 1994 representation election, which it lost. The restructuring occurred during hearings on the first set of ULP charges.

IAM charges Boeing

The Machinists filed unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board charging Boeing is illegally trying to entice workers out of union jobs into a new, nonunion classification.

The union, which represents some 36,000 Boeing workers, claimed the company intends to move hundreds of jobs classified as expediters from the bargaining unit. Boeing recently announced that 1,100 union members who are classified as expediters, who track materials and parts through the production process, would be "invited to move" into a new unrepresented salaried position of "material planner."

The union also charged that the company has unlawfully threatened union members if they and/or the union refused to accept a new work schedule.



San Diego AFL-CIO photo

Striking workers at San Diego's National Shipbuilding haven't had a raise in four years.

Shipyard strikers in tough fight

NASSCO takes tax funds, seeks to bust unions

San Diego, Calif.

Some 1,800 striking workers at San Diego's National Shipbuilding Co. shipyard are hanging tough against union-busting tactics of their employer after more than 3,000 walked out July 17.

The strikers were buoyed by separate visits from AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney and Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, who promised to rally the labor movement on their behalf.

The NASSCO shipyard performs contract work for the U.S. Navy, which means taxpayers are subsidizing the company's anti-union stance. The company's chief executive enjoys fat raises each year while ignoring federal wage requirements for Navy contracts. The workers have not had a raise in four years.

In 1992, workers struck for a month, returning when management agreed to bargain in good faith. But instead of a contract, they got suspension of the dues check-off, interference with shop stewards in the performance of their duties and refusal to discuss union security at the bargaining table.

The unions offered to hold an independently supervised election to show rank-and-file support for a union security clause, but the company refused.

Sweeney said the strike in San Diego is symptomatic of the nation's economic problems. Pointing to the Republican convention across town, he warned that workers will insist that "America Needs A Raise."

"I hope the Republicans can hear us over at the San Diego Convention Center and at some of the plush parties going on around us," he said. "I hope the Perot delegates can hear us up in Long Beach and that the Democrats can hear us next week, because they will most certainly hear us on Nov. 5. We will be heard."

Trumka criticized Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole and his embrace of the core beliefs of supply-side Reaganomics, symbolized strongly by his selection of Jack Kemp as his running mate. "George Bush called supply-side 'voodoo economics.' Well, now union members know it's doo-doo economics," he said.

"The 1980s were a disaster for working people in this country, and just about everything that was wrong with the 1980s went by the name of supply-side economics," he said. "We had a dose of supply-side in the 1980s, and it created the largest deficit in history and the widest gap between rich and poor. Working people may have been born at night, but we weren't born last night."

The AFL-CIO is helping to establish a striker relief fund that will help striking workers make ends meet and continue their struggle against the shipyard's management. Monies go into a central fund administered by the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, to which workers may apply for assistance.

The NASSCO strikers belong to the Ironworkers, Machinists, Electrical Workers, Carpenters, Painters, Operating Engineers and Teamsters. Donations to help them and their families may be sent to: Solidarity Fund for NASSCO Workers, c/o San Diego-Imperial Counties AFL-CIO, 4265 Fairmount Ave., Suite 110, San Diego, Calif. 92105.

— David Kameras

ULLICO invests in new ships, jobs

Newport News, Va.

A labor-business partnership has resulted in a $240 million venture to produce five double-hulled tankers, creating jobs for Steelworkers and, two years out, shipboard jobs for Seafarers and unaffiliated American Maritime Officers.

The ships, which are designed to protect the environment from disastrous oil spills, are being built at Newport News Shipbuilding with the help of funds from Union Labor Life Insurance Co., one of the investors in the project. Union construction is expected to begin in 1997, with the vessels placed in service in 1998.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney joined ULLICO Chairman and CEO Robert A. Georgine, who is also president of the federation's Building and Construction Trades Department, in saluting the labor-management partnership that resulted in the venture.

"It means thousands of Steelworker jobs and more jobs for union seafarers and maritime officers after they are built, and it's a great demonstration of what we can do when there's a little respect coming from an employer," Sweeney said.

Georgine noted that federal loan guarantees cover about 87.5 percent of the cost and add a significant margin of safety to the investment, which is being made with Taft-Hartley pension funds.

"Second, we had to be sure that the other partners would work with us to meet fair labor employment standards," he said. "They did, and it all adds up to environmentally responsible transport of petroleum in U.S. waters by U.S.-built, U.S.-owned and U.S.-operated ships, which is good news for America and good news for workers."

ULLICO's investment objectives included achieving higher-than-market returns, while helping unions, their members and companies that are good employers.

"The project is living proof that jobs and profit can go hand in hand, and are not on a collision course, as some would have us believe," ULLICO said. "In the long-run, America will have a strong economy if investments . . . are made to good use in real-life enterprises where capital and jobs are created."

The "Double Eagles," as the tankers are known, will be among the first tankers built in American shipyards since passage of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, a legislative response to the Exxon Valdez oil spill that requires the phasing out of single-hull vessels entering U.S. waters.

— David Kameras

Mariners weathering rough seas of foreign flags

By David Kameras
Seattle

Throughout the post-war period, the United States has kept its merchant marine afloat through a mixture of subsidies and other support programs to ensure that it can meet its defense commitments and protect its economy.

But soon, the last of the operating subsidy contracts will be expiring, and a coalition of huge multinational grain and shipping interests is placing longstanding maritime policies under attack. Maritime unions see this fight as crucial to the future of the industry and maritime jobs.

The showdown may come next month in the Senate, when a bill to earmark $1 billion a year for 10 years for maritime subsidies comes up. The bill, H.R. 1350, was passed by the House and is supported by the administration. It would allow U.S.-flag operators to compete globally despite the higher costs of the American registry, and indirectly give a boost to commercial shipbuilding as well.

As Congress debates whether to throw a life preserver to the industry, regulatory agencies have granted waivers permitting American shipping companies to register their vessels under foreign "flags of convenience," thereby evading a requirement that their crews be composed of U.S. citizens and the union contracts that protect them.

"American firms are moving foreign flag, which I believe our Congress could put a stop to if they wanted to," said Henry Jones Jr., a Seafarers chief steward serving on liquefied natural gas carriers operated by Energy Transportation Corp. The U.S. government allowed Sea-Land Service to re-flag a portion of its fleet at the cost of up to 150 jobs in Seattle, he said.

Last year, a captain belonging to the Masters, Mates and Pilots, a Longshoremen's affiliate, was fired for hoisting a "Don't Tread On Me" flag after American President Lines, a major West Coast employer, won the right to use foreign crews on its new ships. He was reinstated only after pressure from his union and the AFL-CIO Maritime Trades Department.

Fighting for their livelihood

"The companies are threatening us with foreign flags, which makes you feel insecure," added Dotty Hoffman, an SIU able-bodied seaman and splicer with Trans-Oceanic Cable Co., an AT&T subsidiary. "Plus, they use that during contract negotiations to keep our wages down."

Jones, Hoffman and other maritime workers in Seattle talked recently about the decline of the U.S. merchant marine, and what this could mean for the next generation to go into the shipyards and out to sea.

"The young people coming into the industry now can't count on having a job for 20 years, or having a job they can settle on," Jone said.

"There are no more young people," said Jeff Engels, an able-bodied seaman for nearly 20 years, most of that time with the Inland Boatman's Union of the Pacific, a Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union affiliate. "I would hate to be an 18-year-old today."

"The industry's in trouble, and because of that, the country's security and prestige are in trouble," said Mike Hester, another SIU able-bodied seaman. "Hundreds of thousands of people who work in the maritime industry need to put bread on the table. It's scary."



David Kameras/AFL-CIO News

Seafarers Port Representative Joe Mieluchowski, left, monitors the job opportunities at the union's hiring hall in Seattle.

Still, there are some bright spots for those who ply the waters.

- Several tankers currently are being built in U.S. shipyards, carrying the promise of maintained and expanded jobs in domestic oil shipping.
- Many municipalities and regions have adopted or are considering passenger ferry service, and old-fashioned paddlewheelers are once again cruising the Mississippi River.
- The Ready Reserve Force of auxiliary vessels continues to be strengthened, reflecting the fact that many in the Navy, as well as many in Congress, continue to see the wisdom in having a privatized fleet available for national security purposes.
- Prospects for the international carriage of liquified natural gas remain strong.
- Thanks largely to the efforts of maritime labor, the World Trade Organization continues to exclude maritime services from its regime, protecting U.S. flag domestic routes from foreign operators bent on subjecting their crews to slave-like conditions and by foreign governments willing to operate below cost in order to gain hard currency.

Maritime in global market

National security always has been the guiding rationale for a strong merchant marine. The U.S.-built, U.S.-crewed requirement of the American registry is intended to ensure a shipyard mobilization base and seagoing manpower pool adequate to meet the rigors of a national emergency.

Operating subsidies, meant to compensate shipping companies for the higher costs associated with the flag in what is a global marketplace, require in return a transfer of vessels and crews to military jurisdiction during war, saving the Pentagon billions of dollars in building and mothballing idle ships. But with shrinking federal budgets presided over by legislators from states and districts often far removed from waterborne commerce, out of sight sometimes means out of mind.

> *"The industry's in trouble, and because of that, the country's security and prestige are in trouble. Hundreds of thousands of people who work in the maritime industry need to put bread on the table. It's scary."*
>
> **— Mike Hester**

"These other countries are unscrupulous," Hester said. "They don't care about giving their seamen safe working conditions or a living wage, and because of that, we're at a competitive disadvantage.

"The big question has been whether the government should subsidize private business, but that's really a false issue," he said. "America needs a merchant fleet. Everybody wants America to be strong, Democrat and Republican, rich and poor. The Navy alone isn't going to get the job done, and without a body of merchant mariners and ships that are available to the American merchant fleet, it's not going to happen."

When AT&T recently bought a foreign ship, it registered it under the Stars and Stripes only after getting heat from the military, Hoffman said. "When we lay cables, one fiber is designated a lot of times for military use only. So they saw that as a threat to national security," she said.

The threat isn't limited to technology. Without adequate American ships and enough loyal Americans ready to risk their lives in crewing them in a war zone, the United States can become dangerously dependent on foreign powers.

"An example is Desert Storm," Hoffman said. "I went on three ships to the Persian Gulf carrying equipment, and they actually asked foreign ships to help us, and they turned us down. If that happens again, who's going to supply our troops with the things they need?"

"If we have another Desert Storm, good luck," said Jim Sutton, a District 1 Marine Engineer.

Multinational pirates

Moves to repeal the Jones Act, a 1920 statute that restricts coastwise domestic shipping to U.S.-flag vessels, got a high profile on Capitol Hill this year, thanks largely to multinational interests hoping to include America in the global race to the bottom of a pool of bad wages and working conditions.

"Just seeing the conditions on these foreign vessels is horrendous," said IBU Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast.

"Any proposal that would allow substandard foreign vessels into our coastwise trades would undo the work of generations of men and women who have labored to raise the safety and environmental standards of our U.S.-flag fleet to its current high level," MEBA President Alex Shandrowsky told a House subcommittee this year. "It would be an insult to American values and traditions — and to the citizens of this country — should we cast aside the fruits of that labor."

Maritime unions have been instrumental in helping their members meet the challenges of a rapidly changing industry.

"We're always upgrading our membership," said Jones, whose union operates a state-of-the-art training facility in Maryland.

"Joining the union was sort of like being adopted by a healthy family, a really good family," Hester said. "Everything that I have, the union helped me get. It's an enormous opportunity for someone who doesn't have a lot of skills, but wants to work hard and is willing to learn. It's a good legacy from the working people that came before us."



USWA photo

Celebrating a planned unification are UAW President Stephen P. Yokich, Steelworkers Presidents (past and present) Lynn Williams and George Becker, and Machinists President George Kourpias.

USWA reaches for power in unity

Pittsburgh

Talk of strength through unity and political action dominated the Steelworkers convention as delegates discussed mergers and vowed to mobilize members to elect a pro-worker Congress.

Meeting under the theme, "Together, Tougher Than Steel," the convention was the first since the union's 1995 merger with the Rubber Workers and the announcement of a proposed unification with the UAW and Machinists by 2000. Delegates also were told of ongoing merger talks with the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers.

Presidents Stephen P. Yokich of the UAW and George Kourpias of the IAM joined USWA President George Becker in praising the unification of the three unions as a way to fight anti-worker forces such as Bridgestone/Firestone, Caterpillar and McDonnell Douglas, all of whom are embroiled in labor disputes with one of the three unions. Delegates approved a resolution supporting the unification.

Becker and ABG President Ernie LaBaff announced the ABG will meet in a special convention soon to consider merger with the Steelworkers. If that merger is approved, the union would represent 95 percent of all aluminum workers.

Calling this year "probably the most important in the history of our movement," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney hailed the unification and predicted that labor's "rising spirit and new voice" will spell success in November, ushering in a progressive majority on Capitol Hill and in the White House.

As important as the national election are union representation elections, and there "we are nowhere," still losing members, Sweeney said. If we don't turn that around, "we have absolutely no chance of changing our movement or changing our country, much less making it stick."

President Clinton, who was endorsed for re-election by the convention, addressed the delegates via satellite. He urged the delegates to spread the word about anti-labor measures supported by Republican leaders, many of which would have become law had the administration not vetoed or blocked them. Clinton cited the TEAM Act, Davis-Bacon and Occupational Safety and Health Administration budget cuts as examples of the GOP's efforts to hurt workers.

"Unless we win the presidential election and change the composition of Congress, they will keep trying over and over," Clinton said. The convention voted to work for a new Democratic-controlled Congress.

The delegates also voted to expand the union's "rapid-response" network of members throughout the country. The network, launched in April, is designed to mobilize members to respond to critical issues that face workers.

The network has been used to generate letters and phone calls to legislators. On the TEAM Act alone, USWA Local 831, a former Rubber Workers local in Danville, Va., generated 1,200 letters and phone calls to lawmakers; Local 2175 in Minneapolis produced 196 handwritten letters from its 400 members and 91 of the 106 members of Local 690 in Auburn Hills, Mich., wrote personal letters.

The delegates called on every USWA local to have at least 4 percent of its total membership from all units, departments and locations involved in rapid response. Each local will be equipped with a FAX machine to use in the program, Becker said.

— James B. Parks

Plumbers elect Maddaloni, chart aggressive path

Las Vegas

The Plumbers and Pipefitters elected new leaders, who immediately called for expanded efforts in politics and organizing.

"There are well-funded and tough adversaries out there, and we cannot afford to relax our guard even for a moment," President Martin J. Maddaloni told more than 3,100 delegates to the union's 35th general convention.

He cited attacks on the Davis-Bacon Act, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Mine Safety and Health Administration regulations, limitations on workers' compensation and unemployment insurance, anti-labor amendments to the National Labor Relations Act and attempts to dismantle Medicare.

"We have learned important lessons from this adversity," he said. "It is time to give our adversaries an education of their own."



Martin J. Maddaloni

Maddaloni proposed a covenant with the delegates to build the UA's membership and strength, build and expand the marketplace for union contractors and fight legislators who would diminish members' opportunities and economic security. He also pledged a rededication to aggressive organizing efforts, including targeting areas outside traditional building trades, such as electronics, mechanical equipment service, fire protection and instrumentation.

"We must increase our membership if we are to stay strong and competitive in the years ahead," he said.

That view was echoed by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney. "Unless we get serious about organizing, this year will be like a false spring — we're going to feel really good for a while, and then a cold freeze is going to hit our budding revitalization, and we will be dead," he said.

Maddaloni, who served earlier in a number of union offices, replaces Marvin J. Boede, who retired after 14 years as president. Also elected were Michael A. Collins as secretary-treasurer, C. Randal Gardner as assistant president, a new executive board and 32 international representatives. Delegates also produced a revised union constitution and a wide range of resolutions.

Other speakers included AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department President Robert A. Georgine, Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.), Rep. Thomas M. Foglietta (D-Pa.), Nevada Gov. Bob Miller (D) and National Council of Senior Citizens Director Steve Protulis.

IAM makes federal case of McDonnell Douglas dispute

By James B. Parks

The Machinists asked President Clinton to withhold any federal payments to McDonnell Douglas related to the 11-week strike at the company's St. Louis aerospace defense facilities.

In an Aug. 14 letter, IAM President George J. Kourpias also asked Clinton to request an audit of the quality, cost and safety of all work performed for the government by some 2,000 "temporary replacement" workers from across the country hired by McDonnell Douglas since the strike began June 5. The company also has hired a private security force that specializes in combatting strikes.

"It is my understanding that the U.S. taxpayers are financing this," Kourpias wrote. "Lacking any explicit prohibitions in federal law, military contractors can, and do, bill the Defense Department for costs they incur in a labor dispute," he said.

"The practice of federal agencies subsidizing the strike costs of defense contractors is grossly unfair and discriminatory, and it should be halted at once," Kourpias wrote. McDonnell Douglas, the nation's largest defense contractor, receives about $9.2 billion annually from taxpayer-financed projects.

Negotiations stalled when McDonnell Douglas refused to offer job security protections to settle the strike.

Declaring that "there will be no agreement without job security," IAM District 837 President Jerry Oulsen accused the company of sabotaging the talks. "The union made new proposals to accommodate the company's need for job flexibility, with the clear expectation that the company would meet the workers' need for job security," Oulsen said. "But the company claimed their negotiators have no authority to discuss job security and the subject is no longer even on the table."

The talks broke down Aug. 16, just two days after negotiators had reported progress on the key issue of outsourcing. Bargaining had gone on for five consecutive days before the breakdown, the first time that had occurred since the strike began June 5.

The talks followed a mass "March for American Jobs" by 10,000 people on McDonnell Douglas headquarters in St. Louis Aug. 11, led by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Kourpias.

"America is sick of corporate greed," Trumka told the crowd. "America is sick of rich corporations sending our best jobs and technologies overseas, and taking huge executive bonuses while laying off loyal American workers."

UAW Secretary-Treasurer Roy Wyse told the strikers, "Labor is not going to fail here. This will send a message to other companies all across the nation and teach them something about corporate responsibility. Mac won't win."

Some 6,400 employees walked out June 5 at McDonnell Douglas' St. Louis plant after rejecting the aerospace company's latest contract offer. The key issue in the talks is McDonnell's increasing use of outside contractors and the transfer of some work to nonunion plants in Mesa, Ariz., and Macon, Ga.

The union is seeking the same basic job security provisions that already cover workers at McDonnell Douglas competitors, Boeing, General Electric and Pratt & Whitney, Oulsen said.

The company announced June 12 it would hire temporary replacement workers at the plant, which makes military aircraft, and temporarily transfer some production to other plants or to subcontractors.

BARGAINING

California employees gain

A year of bitter negotiations ended when the California State Employees, an affiliate of the Service Employees, reached agreement with the California State University system on a new three-year contract.

Under the agreement, some 13,000 employees will receive a 2.48 percent raise retroactive to July 1. The contract also includes an increase in shift differential pay and a 2 percent service salary increase. Workers in seven classifications will receive raises to bring their salaries in line with similar workers outside the university system. The contract expired in July 1995.

Unit members also will receive paid maternity leave and family leave consistent with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

The agreement covers administrative, instructional support, operations, health care and technical support employees of the CSU system.

Gas workers settle

The Utility Workers and Chemical Workers reached tentative agreement on a new two-year contract with Southern California Gas that would raise salaries by 3 percent for 5,100 employees.

The deal includes a 2.7 percent lump sum bonus after ratification and another 2.7 percent payment in 1997, the same year the wage increase begins. The company agreed not to lay off any full-time employee in the bargaining unit except for disciplinary reasons.

In a side agreement, both sides agreed to limit to 250 per year the total number of layoffs, terminations and work force reductions in the two years after the contract expires in 1998.

IUE in 15-year GM pact

Electronic Workers Local 801 ratified a 15-year local-level agreement with General Motors that is intended to secure the future of the Delphi Harrison Thermal Systems plant in Loraine, Ohio.

The agreement, which covers 3,300 hourly employees, establishes a two-tier wage system and provides early retirement incentives for senior employees.

GM considered closing the suburban Dayton plant that makes compressors and dehydrators for automotive air conditioners, but kept it open after negotiations produced cost-cutting. The new agreement includes assurances from GM to keep the plant open as long as it remains profitable.

IBT strikes Guerrero

Protesting unfair labor practices, 200 delivery drivers represented by Teamsters Local 63 went on strike Aug. 4 at Guerrero Mexican Food Products, the largest tortilla producer in southern California.

The union charges that as a subsidiary of a huge Mexican corn flour conglomerate closely aligned with that country's ruling circles, Guerrero, which also markets under the "Mission" brand, has benefited from corporate welfare and has been driving independent operators out of business.

The drivers, who are seeking a second contract with payment of overtime, better health insurance and a pension plan, joined with other labor, community, campus and religious groups for a rally Aug. 7 in front of the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles.

With up to 70 percent of the local market, Mission-Guerrero sells to large grocery chains like Ralphs and Vons and smaller stores, with the remainder going to food-service buyers like Taco Bell and the U.S. Army.

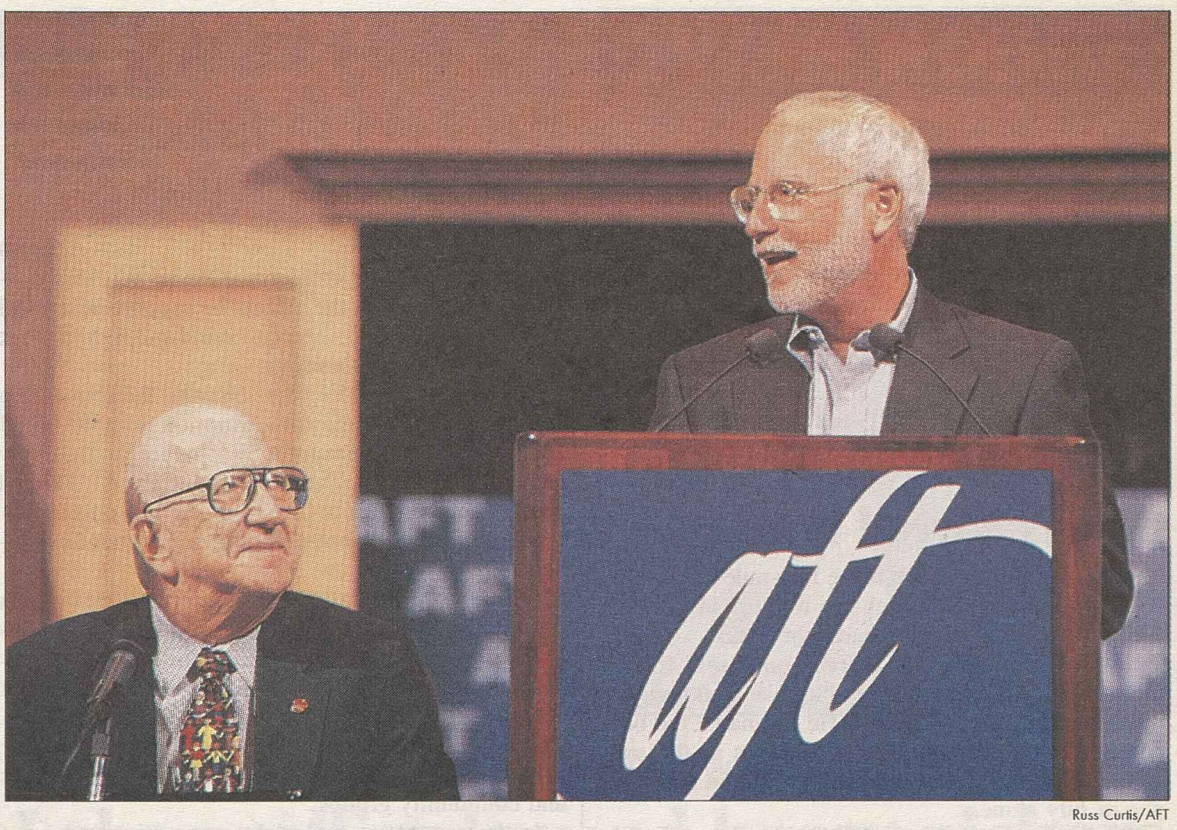
Atomic workers extend

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers ratified a five-year extension of an agreement with Lockheed Martin Energy Systems.

It covers some 800 employees at the Energy Department's Oak Ridge, Tenn., operations and follows the pattern set in contracts negotiated by the Oak Ridge Atomic Trades Council. Those cover 2,500 employees from 17 unions, and all apply to three Oak Ridge facilities operated by Lockheed for DoE.

The new agreement raises wages by 3 percent each year for production and maintenance employees at the K-25 facility, which is involved in atomic waste management and environmental work. Employees also will receive a $500 lump-sum bonus.

Employees will have a choice between two managed care medical plans that will replace the preferred provider and health maintenance programs.



Russ Curtis/AFT

Richard Dreyfuss, an Academy Award nominee for his role as an inspirational music teacher in "Mr. Holland's Opus," tells why he has endorsed the AFT's "Lessons for Life" campaign. AFT President Albert Shanker is at left.

AFT: 'Preserve Public Education'

Cincinnati

AFT delegates were challenged by President Albert Shanker to increase activism in and out of the classroom. "It is as much our duty to preserve public education as it is to negotiate a good contract or defend a competent teacher under attack," he said.

Speaking to the union's 74th biennial convention, Shanker said there is still support for public education, especially when schools hold students to high standards in academic achievement and discipline.

Shanker urged union members to become involved with AFT's "Lessons for Life" campaign, in which members, communities, parents and legislators push for shared goals.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney lauded the campaign and told delegates they have the full support of the federation. He also recognized the union's effort to "put public education back in its proper place at the top of our national agenda."

"Creating strong academic standards in the United States is doable," said Shanker, citing the union's second annual "Making Standards Matter" report, an analysis of efforts to develop improved academic standards throughout the country.

The union also released a report endorsing charter schools as a useful tool for school reform, provided they can demonstrate improved student achievement.

The convention featured 16 workshops on such major educational issues as moving from social promotion to earned promotion, establishing and enforcing standards of conduct and college-school partnerships to raise student achievement.

The delegates endorsed President Clinton and Vice President Gore, later hearing from the vice president. Other speakers included Rep. Richard A. Gephardt, (D-Mo.), actor/activist Richard Dreyfuss, and human rights activists Harry Wu and 13-year-old Craig Kielburger, who has spoken out against child labor.

After hearing from Wu and Kielburger, the delegates passed a resolution pledging to put sweatshops out of business. "It is unconscionable what these companies do to save money," said Shanker. "We will do whatever it takes to get sweatshop owners to change their practices."

The union will work with organizations in the Partnership for Responsibility, a coalition designed to end sweatshops and protect workers' rights.

Approving continued merger discussions with the National Education Association, the convention passed a no-raid agreement between the unions.

Delegates also approved a 4.4 percent per-capita increase over the next two years.

Responding to the market-driven changes in health care, the convention approved a nationwide campaign "to mobilize consumers and purchases of care, health care workers and the general public to promote and defend high standards of quality, access and choice. The AFT's Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals division will lead the "Quality First" campaign.

— Muriel H. Cooper

Fire Fighters vow war on privatization

Honolulu

Delegates to the 43rd Fire Fighters convention vowed to use the power of the ballot box and union solidarity to stop privatization and other anti-worker measures.

Following an address by President Clinton via satellite, the 1,500 delegates responded with unanimous endorsement of the Clinton-Gore ticket, citing Clinton's support for national collective bargaining for all public employees, among other pro-worker stances.

Whitehead told delegates President Clinton is "pro-worker, pro-family and pro-fire fighter," citing the administration's support for important safety regulations that protect fire fighters in the line of duty.

To thwart state and local governments' efforts to privatize public service across the country, the delegates also earmarked nearly $250,000 for a major new initiative to combat privatization of the nation's fire and emergency medical services.

"If we are to meet the challenges of the future, if our union is to be positioned to represent the interests of our members in the next millennium, then we must continue to stay ahead of the curve," IAFF President Alfred K. Whitehead said.

Private, for-profit corporations are an emerging threat to the living standards, economic security and professionalism of fire fighters, Whitehead declared. "These corporations offer to provide fire and emergency medical services more cheaply — and still made a profit by cutting down wages, apparatus, staffing levels, training and professional standards."

Delegates underscored the union's commitment to political action by voting for a substantial increase in funding for the IAFF PAC.

"You have one of the finest legislative and political operations in the American labor movement, and every time the bell rings, you are there," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the delegates. "Over the past few years, you've demonstrated what it takes by increasing your political action activity tenfold and pouring resources into legislative fights."

Delegates also re-elected Whitehead and Secretary-Treasurer Vincent J. Bollon to their third four-year terms. Fifteen district vice presidents were re-elected, along with a new vice president, William Taylor, representing the fourth district in Baltimore.

Other speakers included Hawaii Democratic Sen. Daniel Akaka and Reps. Patsy Mink and Neil Abercrombie; and Jerry Lewis, entertainer and chairman of the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

UNION NEWS

Tosco reopens refinery

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 8-234 scored a win when Tosco offered to reopen the old BP refinery it bought, with a union work force.

Tosco will rehire 215 of the 500 workers who lost jobs when the refinery, located near Philadelphia, was closed early this year. The company also will spend $50 million to update the factory over the next year.

"People are going to be real happy around here" when the refinery reopens, said Denis J. Stephano, president of Local 8-234. "A lot of people were completely convinced it would never run again."

Unions boycott bridge

A building trades boycott of the 17.6-mile Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel has resulted in nearly 9 percent less traffic by autos and light trucks.

"We believe we've hit a home run," said C. Ray Davenport, president of the Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council. He estimated the boycott, which is supported by the unions in the state AFL-CIO, cost the state about $300,000 in lost revenue in July alone.

The dispute centers on the construction of a new parallel span connecting Virginia's Eastern Shore with the Virginia Beach and Tidewater areas.

The $200 million job is being constructed with imported, nonunion labor. Davenport said PCL Civil Constructors Inc. of Denver refused to negotiate prehire agreements with the Operating Engineers, Laborers and Carpenters, and instead brought in workers from as far away as Florida and Canada.

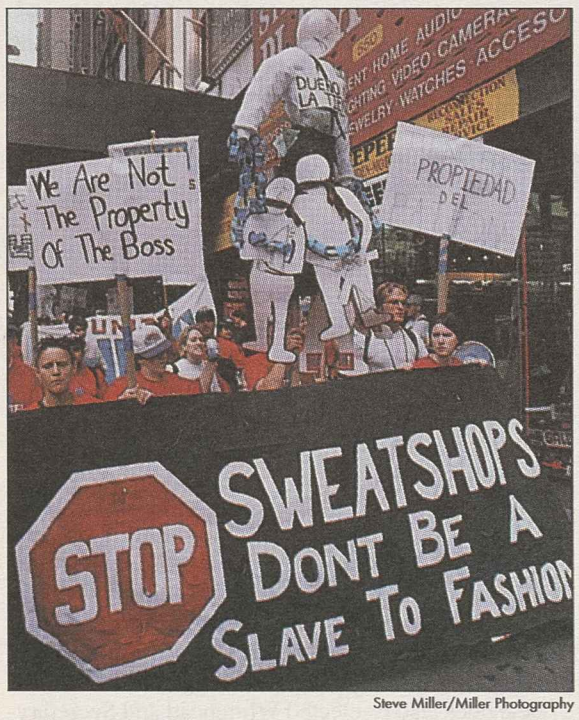
APALA plans organizing

In another sign of a resurgent labor movement's commitment to organizing, more than 250 union leaders, organizers and Asian-Pacific-American union activists met in San Diego to develop plans to organize the millions of Asian-Pacific-Americans in the work force.

It was the largest organizing conference in recent history, Service Employees President Andy Stern said, telling the cheering audience that the union movement "must stop talking about organizing and start funding."

Richard Bensinger, head of the AFL-CIO Organizing Department, agreed, and applauded Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance for calling on labor unions to allocate 30 percent of their resources to organizing.

A joint organizing proposal was developed and announced by Guy Fujimura, secretary-treasurer of the Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Local 142. Under the proposal, APALA and the unions would develop a national network of Asian-Pacific-American organizers, train and hire new organizers, reach out to more Asian-Pacific-American workers in campaigns, and develop Asian-Pacific-American leaders.



Steve Miller/Miller Photography

Hundreds marched in New York City's garment district Aug. 16 as part of a growing national outcry against sweatshops. Jay Mazur, president of UNITE, and Lenore Miller, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, were appointed by President Clinton to serve as labor representatives in a new apparel industry, labor and human rights coalition to develop strategies to eradicate sweatshops in the U.S. garment industry.

APWU vows fight to keep jobs

Delegates go to streets to help hotel workers

Los Angeles

Delegates to the 13th biennial Postal Workers convention took to the streets in support of a local organizing drive and vowed to stand and fight against efforts to privatize their jobs.

The nearly 3,000 delegates emptied the convention hall and joined a huge demonstration with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees at the New Otani Hotel. Despite the searing heat, the APWU and HERE members met at City Hall and walked a seven-block circuit to the hotel, shouting and chanting slogans.

HERE Local 11 called for an international boycott of the nonunion New Otani Hotel on Jan. 24 and has been picketing regularly since. The hotel illegally fired three pro-union housekeepers with 16 years of service in order to thwart a union organizing drive. The boycott is endorsed by 11 of 15 members of the L.A. City Council, as well as dozens of labor, religious and community groups.

In the convention hall, delegates participated in an interactive live video to dramatize the anti-worker agenda of right-wing politicians like Newt Gingrich and managers like Postmaster General Marvin Runyon.

APWU President Moe Biller called on the union members to fight in every way necessary all efforts to destroy postal jobs through privatization, outsourcing and all other means of stealing work from postal workers. "We're now fighting for our future. That's our theme, and solidarity is what's essential."

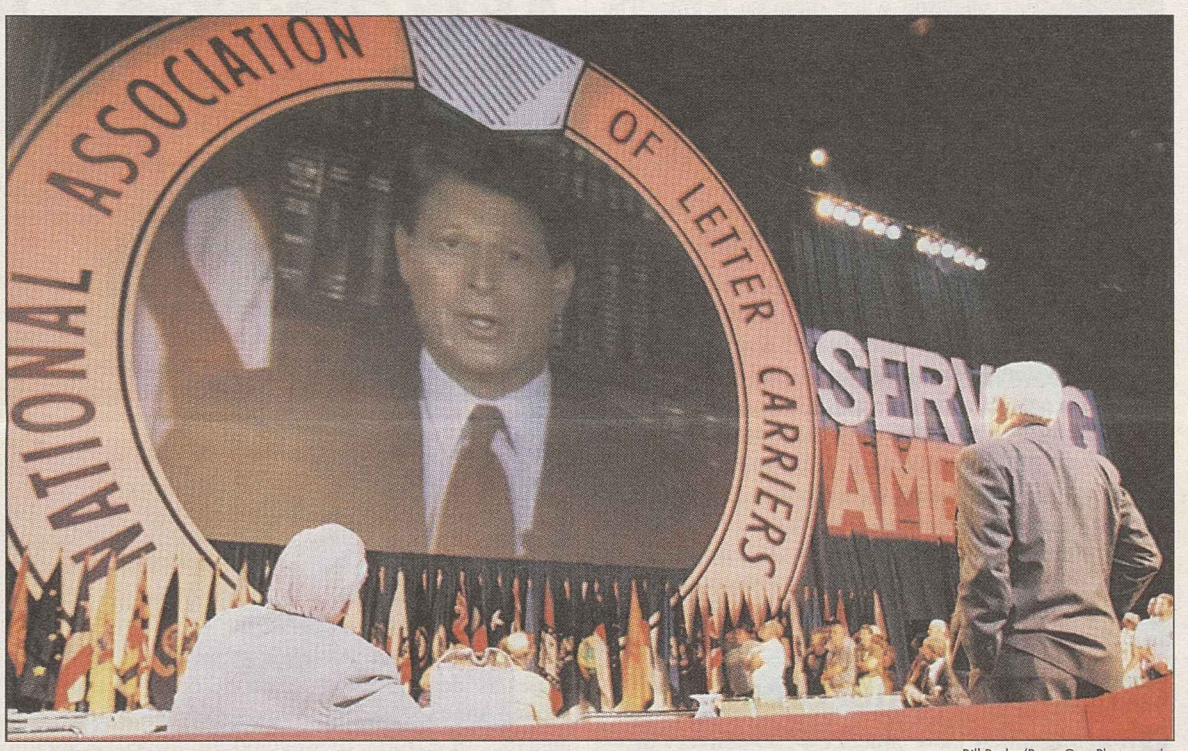
Delegates also passed more than 50 resolutions addressing labor-management issues, including the staffing of contract stations, wages and weekend and overtime work.

House Minority Whip David E. Bonior (D-Mich.) said a change to Democrats in control of Congress would end anti-worker proposals at the USPS. "This election isn't about unfunded mandates and the line-item veto," he said. "It's about jobs and wages and pensions and working conditions and health care and education for our kids."

In a videotaped message, Senate Minority Leader Thomas S. Daschle (D-S.D.) promised to fight USPS privatization proposals.

The fight must continue at the ballot box, said Electronic Workers Vice President Gloria Johnson, who is also president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. "If President Clinton isn't re-elected and we don't recapture the House and Senate, we can say goodbye to the hard-won rights of workers," she said.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Vice President Gore, addressing the NALC convention by satellite, declares the Postal Service could be made to work even better. "But privatize? Not on your life. Because, like you, we support the Postal Service."

NALC says Clinton, Yes; Runyon, No

Orlando, Fla.

Political action and the fight against privatization took center stage at the Letter Carriers convention as 8,100 delegates endorsed the re-election of President Clinton and voted "no confidence" in the postmaster general.

Prior to the endorsement vote, Vice President Gore addressed the convention via satellite, noting the accomplishments of the administration that have benefited Letter Carriers and other working men and women.

"Many on the other side say privatize," Gore said. "Reform yes. Make it work even better, you bet. But privatize? Not on your life — because, like you, we support the Postal Service."

NALC President Vincent R. Sombrotto also reminded the delegates of the union's position on supporting candidates regardless of party. "If the representatives support us, we support them. If they don't support us, we don't support them."

Delegates unanimously voted "no confidence" in Postmaster General Marvin Runyon, who has demonstrated his lack of support for workers with efforts to privatize and restrict rights, the NALC declared in a resolution.

The resolution also noted that mail processing automation continues despite serious problems, that communications between the NALC and USPS have deteriorated because of abandonment of the Employee Involvement process and that Runyon's policies have undercut carriers' efforts to provide superior mail service.

Numerous speakers in the jammed Orange County, Fla., convention center called for action at the ballot box and at the post office.

Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-Hawaii) told delegates that in order to have a worker-friendly Congress next year, "everyone must work hard in the November elections."

Reps. Gene Green (D-Texas) and Karen Thurman (D-Fla.) said the current Congress has been the most anti-worker since 1947, and the only remedy is to send the GOP-controlled body home.

Former Labor Secretary Ray Marshall told the delegates that elected officials should be forced to adopt a high-wage strategy. Without it, Americans are "going to stay on the same path (in which) the rich get richer, workers will be less well off" and the country's institutions will be weakened.

Philip Bower, general secretary of the Postal, Telephone and Telegraph International, said that unions in Europe are resisting privatization, and that unions in Great Britain are fighting management efforts to have "team working," which is designed to reduced the influence of unions in the workplace.

Delegates also elected seven union members to serve as delegates to the AFL-CIO convention next year.

Other speakers included former Steelworkers President Lynn Williams; Jeff Faux, president of the Economic Policy Institute; and radio commentator Jim Hightower.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

UNION NEWS

GMP re-elects leaders

The Glass, Molders and Pottery Workers re-elected their top leaders and rallied the union to meet the political challenge this year.

"America's unions are back!" AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka proclaimed as he urged the delegates to mobilize for the November election and beyond. "You can feel the anger and the resentment and the frustration turning into hope for tens of millions of working Americans."

GMP President Frank W. Carter told the convention that concerted political action could help win a better future for working people. The 762 delegates, meeting in Las Vegas, voted to raise international union dues by $2 per month per member and to give locals the option of raising dues by up to $4.50 per month. The increase was needed, Secretary-Treasurer James H. Rankin said, to sustain the services the international provides.

Carter, Rankin and all other incumbent officers were re-elected without opposition.

Other speakers included House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.), Minority Whip David E. Bonior (D-Mich.), Rep. Robert F. Andrews (D-N.J.) and Gordon Wilson, president of the Ontario labor federation.

Carpenters in training pact

In the second major agreement of its kind this year, the Carpenters have joined forces with the Ingersoll-Rand Architectural Hardware Division to improve training and standards in the construction industry.

Ingersoll-Rand will provide technical support and training materials and will certify instructors and installers upon completion of the training. The UBC will provide the apprenticeship and training programs. The union signed a similar agreement with Wilsonart this year.

"This program is a win-win-win arrangement," said Dudley Light, UBC technical coordinator for apprenticeship. "The construction industry, Ingersoll-Rand and the UBC will all benefit from this innovative program."

W.Va. talks politics

It was politics, politics and politics at the West Virginia AFL-CIO convention Aug. 15-16 in Charleston.

"Working families and their unions are re-emerging as a national political force," AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson told the convention, "because Congress got the message that we're watching what they do."

Some 300 delegates endorsed for re-election their congressional contingent of Democratic Reps. Alan B. Mollohan, Robert E. Wise Jr. and Nick Joe Rahall II, as well as Sen. John J. Rockefeller IV (D). Democratic challenger Charlotte Pritt garnered the group's nod for governor, while endorsements were made in several statewide judicial races as well.

Resolutions concerning workers' compensation and public employees' right to organize were taken up.

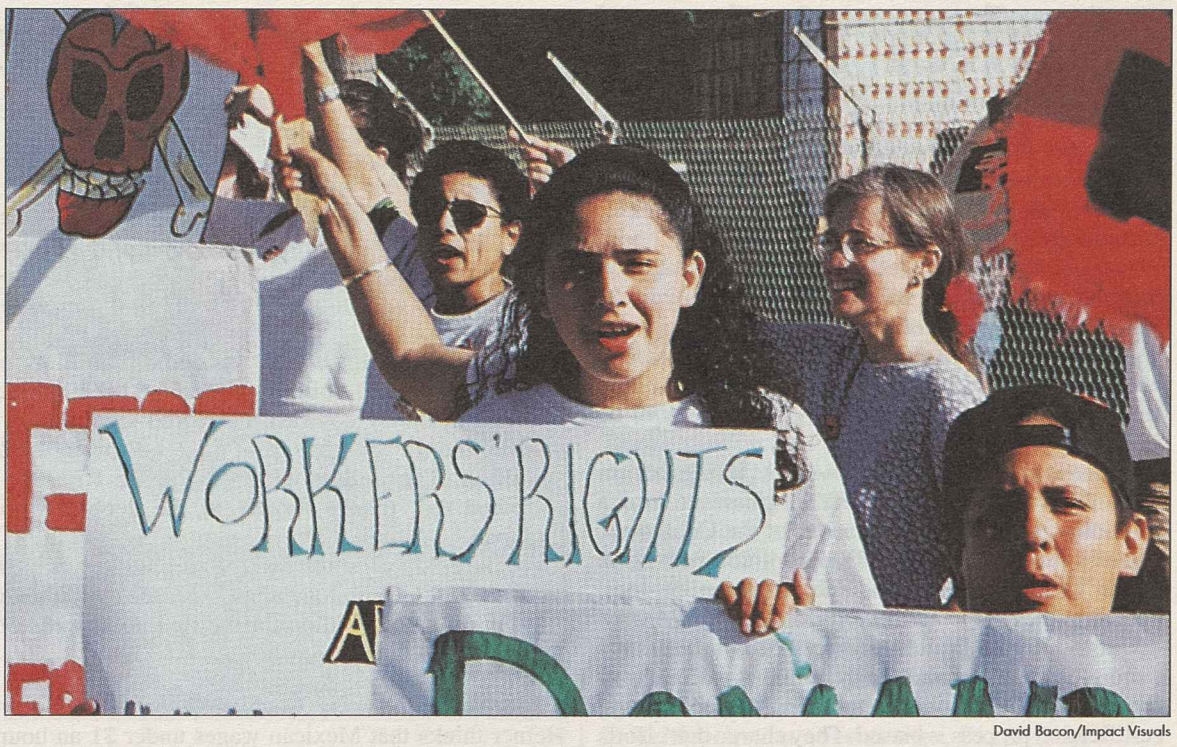
'Tis the (political) season

Trade unionists meeting one state away from West Virginia also focused on politics, as the 29th constitutional convention of the Virginia AFL-CIO met in Williamsburg Aug. 15-17.

Federation President John J. Sweeney keynoted that gathering, warning Democrats in the state's legislature that labor is tired of carrying their water and coming up with a bucket of mud. Sweeney also went to Newport News Shipbuilding with AFL-CIO Vice President and Union Labor Life Chairman Robert A. Georgine to laud a labor-business partnership.

The 350 delegates made endorsements in several congressional races including the Warner Senate race, choosing Democrat Mark Warner over incumbent Republican John Warner. Also up for discussion were resolutions concerning Bridgestone/Firestone, federal unions, civil rights, community sevices, the Human Resources Development Institute, organizing, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and education.

Besides Sweeney, the attendees heard from Warner, AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal, Field Mobilization Director Marilyn Sneiderman and Evelyn DuBrow, vice president of UNITE.



David Bacon/Impact Visuals

Union Summer activists join Farm Workers in Watsonville, Calif., to protest conditions in the strawberry fields.

Labor rallies 'round berry pickers

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

As the Farm Workers' black eagle flag waved above 15 cities, thousands of trade unionists and community activists from San Jose, Calif., to New Haven, Conn., rallied Aug. 14 with shouts of "Si Se Puede" (Yes We Can).

The national day of action to support strawberry workers was organized by the UFW and AFL-CIO central labor councils during last month's national CLC conference. The strawberry workers endure unsanitary conditions, no health insurance, slave-like wages and 12-hour work days.

In San Jose, more than 300 trade unionists, religious and community organizations joined in the demonstration in front of the downtown federal building. "This is just the beginning," said San Jose CLC Executive Officer Amy Dean. "We're going to make sure the injustices strawberry pickers endure become common knowledge."

In Watsonville, Calif., the UFW strawberry campaign's headquarters, some 800 trade unionists, strawberry workers and their supporters turned out for the third in a series of protests at local berry coolers. "Consumers and the public are tired of seeing workers being exploited. There hasn't been a wage increase in 10 years," said UFW President Arturo Rodriguez as the crowd chanted in Spanish, "We see it, we feel it, the union is here."

In downtown San Francisco, workers waved UFW flags, formed a human billboard during lunch hour and chanted, "Strawberry growers, you're no good, treat your workers like you should."

During a protest evoking memories of the Cesar Chavez-led grape and lettuce boycotts of the 1960s and 70s, more than 100 Denver trade unionists launched their campaign with a rally in front of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. In Chicago, chanting workers were confronted by managers of the Whole Foods Market and were asked by the police to leave.

Following each demonstration, participants passed out literature asking consumers to "please tell your grocer to support strawberry workers' basic rights." They also visited grocery stores and asked store managers to sign a pledge form stating their support for "strawberry workers' rights, including a living wage, health insurance and clean drinking water and bathrooms in the fields."

The workers received additional resources when the AFL-CIO Executive Council voted Aug. 6 to provide matching funds to the strawberry campaign from the federation's organizing campaign fund.

UMWA pact gains on wages, pensions

The Mine Workers won significant improvements in pension benefits, health insurance and wages for its members and retirees in a renegotiated agreement with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association. A reopener option in the 1993 contract paved the way for the gains.

"The solidarity our members showed on the picket lines in 1993 and the growth of our strike fund placed the union in an excellent position to negotiate these improvements," UMWA President Cecil Roberts said. "I am pleased to say we reached this agreement without having to strike any BCOA companies."

The pension provisions apply to about 100,000 members in the union's 1950 and 1974 plans. The other improvements cover 40,000 miners employed by BCOA companies or firms with "me too" agreements.

The new agreement eliminates a huge penalty for miners laid off before they turn 50 and who choose to retire at 55 under the terms of the deferred vested pension program.

Any laid-off miner, regardless of age at time of layoff, who has at least 20 years of service covered by the 1974 plan and who has worked after Dec. 16, 1993, would receive a full pension if he or she retires at 55.

The agreement also raises pension credits and extends and increases annual bonuses until 1997. The UMWA also won a 25 percent reduction in the annual family health insurance deductible, dropping it from $1,000 to $750.

The 1993 contract expires Aug. 31, 1998, and both sides agreed to early negotiations in 1997.

Iron Workers plan to build for future

Las Vegas

Delegates to the Iron Workers' centennial anniversary convention approved the addition of a new classification of workers to the union's official name — reinforcing iron workers.

Now 100 years old, the new International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers was urged by President Jake West to "honor the heroes of the past and build a brighter future for ourselves and for all the Iron Workers who will come after us."

The union's past could be seen at the Historic Display Area, which included thousands of such items as photographs, tools, clothing, official records, convention memorabilia, dues/membership books dating back to 1896 and a hot rivet display.

The future of the union, and of the entire labor movement, depends on vigorous organizing activity, said AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department President Robert Georgine, who announced plans for a multicraft organizing campaign.

"The open-shop movement is like a virus," he said. "We have an antidote — organizing — that is the vaccine against this open-shop disease."

Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), chairman of the Democratic Party, urged the delegates to look to the near future and this year's election. He denounced Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole for voting against Medicare and said, "Comparing the candidates, the choice is clear — President Clinton."

Other speakers included Nevada Gov. Bob Miller (D); Occupational Safety and Health Administration Director Joseph Dear; and Steve Protulis, director of the National Council of Senior Citizens.

Worker rights in Mexico will get U.S. hearing

By David Kameras

The Labor Department has agreed to review charges that Mexican labor law discriminates against federal workers who try to organize and register independent unions.

Acting on a petition filed by three labor and human rights groups, the U.S. National Administrative Office, an agency created to monitor the labor side accord of the North American Free Trade Agreement, will recommend whether the charges warrant ministerial consultations. The report by the NAO will be released within 120 days.

Under the Mexican process, workers trying to form an independent union must first get clearance from a panel that includes representatives of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), a union with close ties to the ruling party, the subject of earlier complaints in the private sector.

Human Rights Watch/Americas, the International Labor Rights Fund and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers contend that Mexico's union certification process is biased. They charge that efforts to register independent unions are "arbitrarily" rejected, thereby denying federal workers their right to associate and organize freely.

The petition was filed in the wake of a number of Mexican Supreme Court decisions striking down a long-standing practice of prohibiting union registration by public workers where another union is already present, and scrapping extension of state contracting schemes at privatized businesses, including no-strike clauses. These decisions may prove to be valuable tools in breaking the hegemony of the pro-government CTM.

The issue of union registration came up two years ago when workers at a Sony Corp. plant in Nuevo Laredo attempted to form an independent union. Further declaring their independence last May, a million workers defied a parade ban imposed by CTM and marched in Mexico City's main square to protest their government's economic policies.

The lack of strong independent labor organizations has helped to keep wages depressed in Mexico, making that country more attractive to U.S. employers like General Electric, which has joined the exodus of manufacturing taking place under NAFTA.

Electronic Workers Local 162 President Gary Hefner thinks that Mexican wages under $1 an hour was a big factor in GE's Aug. 1 closure of a residential transformer plant in Hickory, N.C. "At those wages, the workers are practically paying the company to come to work," he told a "Families First" hearing held by congressional Democrats.

"We have 343 hourly workers and 250 salaried workers losing their jobs," Hefner said. "We gave GE all they demanded. We worked with them in their labor-management cooperation schemes, even though the benefits all accrued to the company. We gave them everything they asked us to give, in the hope of keeping our jobs in Hickory. They took it all, and then they took our jobs too."

Other American employers are playing the Mexico card. Ford Motor Co. barred Canadian and U.S. union officials and human rights group members from observing an Aug. 13 union election at one of the company's plants near Mexico City, although the group spent the day in front of the plant interviewing workers. Ford kept the Cleto Nigmo Committee of Independent Observers out in deference to the existing union, a section of the CTM, which Ford said could decide all union matters.

The group called for invalidation of the election because a slate of dissident candidates was refused inclusion on the ballot, despite having collected sufficient signatures to qualify.

Postal Workers President Moe Biller charged the Postal Service with helping a San Diego firm use Mexican workers earning $4 a day to prepare letters for large-scale U.S. mailing companies, in effect sending postal jobs south of the border.

Meanwhile, the United States is running into opposition from its trading partners as it tries to get the World Trade Organization to agree to linkage between trade and labor standards.

The United Kingdom has been a leading voice in the European Community against the proposal, joined by developing countries, many of whom rely on a submissive domestic work force to expand their markets.

The governments of many developing countries have cozy relationships with multinational corporations like Nike and Reebok, resulting in minuscule wages and outrageous working conditions, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson told the Executive Council in August.

"I am convinced that unless we address this, the vast body of oppressed workers can swallow up our labor market and not even have indigestion," he said.

Widest U.S. trade gap with China

For the first time, the bilateral deficit with China exceeded that with Japan, reflecting a continued but largely unreported surge in imports from a country that uses forced and low-wage labor.

The U.S.-China deficit reached $3.3 billion in June, up from $3 billion a year ago. The deficit with Japan, by contrast, narrowed significantly over the 12 months, from $5.3 billion to $3.2 billion. The deficit with the Pacific Rim narrowed too, thanks largely to the decline with Japan.

The gold rush south by U.S. corporations helped to create a bilateral merchandise trade deficit with Mexico of $8.3 billion for the first six months of the year, $600 million greater than in the same period in 1995.

Overall, the merchandise trade deficit was $12.3 billion in June, a decrease from $13.2 billion a month earlier.

For the first half of the year, deficits were scored in vehicles ($26.4 billion), clothing and footwear ($20.2 billion), data processing and office machinery ($11.6 billion), electrical machinery ($9.6 billion), home electronics ($5.5 billion), toys and sporting goods ($3.9 billion), iron and steel products ($3.7 billion), furniture and bedding ($2.9 billion) and paper and paperboard ($1 billion). Airplanes and parts ($10.3 billion) and general and specialized machinery ($3.8 billion) yielded surpluses.

As layoffs mount, backlash grows

By David Kameras

In the wake of AFL-CIO efforts to inform Americans of the consequences of low wages and job insecurity, evidence of a backlash against the mania of corporate mergers and downsizing that has marked this decade appears to be growing.

One example can be seen in the obscure government procurement regulations that actually encourage armsmakers to merge into megacorporations, costing thousands of jobs. This situation brought together Independent Rep. Bernard Sanders (Vt.) and Republican Rep. Christopher H. Smith (N.J.) to sponsor an amendment to the defense appropriations bill to stop "payoffs for layoffs."

Already, the American taxpayer is slated to foot the bill for some $300 million in merger expenses, on the absurd premise that closing plants increases productivity that will result in cost savings some time in the future, courtesy of an even more concentrated defense establishment.

When Lockheed and Martin Marietta merged, thousands of union workers at an assembly plant in Marietta, Ga., were let go. Yet "contrary to the facts of an increasing stock value and skyrocketing executive compensation, our members did not receive any compensation or retraining assistance," said James M. Carroll, president and directing business representative of Machinists Local Lodge 709.

The Sanders-Smith amendment was passed in the House but rejected by the Senate. Still, conferees may move for a study of the problem.

"At a time when real wages in this country for working people are in decline, at a time when people are scared to death about whether or not they are going to have their decent-paying jobs, they do not want to see their tax dollars going to large multibillion-dollar corporations so that these companies can then merge and lay off American workers," Sanders said.

Polls show that Americans increasingly believe that corporate greed is the source of their economic insecurity, putting corporations on the defensive.

Briggs & Stratton Corp., for example, sued the National Catholic Reporter, an independent nonprofit religious newsweekly, for $30 million over an article almost two years old that asserted the company was "in either denial or moral blindness" when it acted to shift 2,000 union jobs in Milwaukee to nonunion plants in the South.

Corporate prickleness, however, has not been matched by corporate responsibility. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 232,713 workers lost their jobs as part of mass layoffs during the first quarter of this year.

And private-sector figures have the number of layoffs in July pegged at 41,843, 4.2 percent higher than in June and almost 80 percent more than a year ago.

In July, the jobless rate edged up 0.1 percent, to 5.4 percent, remaining in the range of 5.3 percent to 5.8 percent where it has languished since the fall of 1994.

In addition to 7.3 million officially jobless, 4.4 million were working involuntary part time and 1.4 million wanted work and were available, but had stopped looking for jobs. That left a total of 13.1 million unemployed or underemployed. The alternative rate used by BLS to evaluate labor underutilization held steady at 10 percent.

The economy added 193,000 payroll jobs in July, but that was less than the 273,000 monthly average increase registered in the second quarter of the year and far less than that needed to meet the objectives of legislative mandates already in place, according to AFL-CIO economist Frank Parente. "If the jobless rate had been 4 percent, the goal of the Humphrey-Hawkins full employment law, there would have been almost 2 million fewer jobless people," he said.

"In the 64 months since the end of the last recession, the economy has added 11.4 million jobs, compared with 15.7 million additional jobs in a similar period following the recession of the early 1980s and 13.2 million following the recession of the mid-1970s," Parente said.

Job growth in July was led by a jump of 89,000 in retail trade, the fourth consecutive large gain, while construction added 25,000 jobs, and business services, 35,000. But manufacturing lost another 20,000 jobs, a total of 282,000 since its most recent peak in March 1995. Federal employment also declined.

Household gains responsibility for union credit card

The Union Privilege MasterCard portfolio now is in the hands of Household International.

Bank of New York (Delaware) turned over the assets Aug. 19, making Household responsible for all customer service, mailing all bills and notices and making credit decisions using its own approval criteria.

Current cardholder notification began Aug. 22, with a welcome package to follow in October and quarterly mailings beginning in January.

In an effort to improve on the card, Union Privilege and Household plan a series of product tests beginning in October, including what types of offers and telemarketing are best and how to tailor a card for members with credit problems or no credit history.

Household also is developing a benefit to allow cardholders to transfer balances from other, higher-interest cards to pay them off at the prime rate. The company also is exploring the development of a money-saving "rewards" type of program.

Additionally, Household plans to make available to unions its HOMEBASE database to better understand and communicate with members and the general public.

The company has retained the scholarship program, skip payment and strike benefits.

Union Privilege made the switch in administration of its card to provide better service for union members and gain the payment of royalties to the AFL-CIO and its affiliates. That money — some $300 million in royalties over the first five years — will finance organizing and national outreach to benefit the entire labor movement. It will be split between the federation and international unions.

Union Summer helped organize, build coalitions

Continued from Page 1

going to crack, it cracked. Management said we won the war."

The activists used a number of creative tactics, including guerrilla theater performances in various restaurants, pools and hotels on the resort island, running in the annual road race while demonstrating with signs to support the workers, and talking to the neighbors of Melrose's managers about workers' concerns.

"The union and Melrose employees have been fighting long and hard for this contract, and we would not be celebrating this victory so early if not for the daily, in-your-face tactics of Union Summer activists," said David Miller, an IUOE representative.

In his report to the council, Levin noted that more than 3,500 young people applied for Union Summer. Almost half of the applicants have parents who are union members. Fifty-eight percent of the June and July participants were women and 48 percent were people of color, reflecting the current rainbow work force.

At least 26 unions put Union Summer activists to work on their organizing campaigns. Alliances were formed and strengthened with many community and religious organizations.

Union Summer also has served as a union-building operation at the local level, said AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger.

"Union Summer has helped to energize local unions," he said. "It has helped to create models for campaigns in which we allocate more resources to organizing, as well as involve the rank and file and community allies in our efforts."

The interns immersed themselves in creative substance, distributing more than 150,000 leaflets, collecting more than 65,000 signatures on petitions, conducting 4,088 house visits with workers in organizing campaigns and registering 3,237 voters.

Activists in Los Angeles leafleted Camachos Restaurant more than 15 times during a three-week period, convincing management to recognize the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 814 and rehire all the workers whose status was disputed.

Food and Commercial Workers Local 876 credited the work of activists with helping to wrestle a master contract and neutrality agreement from a Michigan drug store chain.

Service Employees Local 790 said Union Summer house calls and work site visits were instrumental in winning a unit of substitute teachers in the Oakland, Calif., school district.

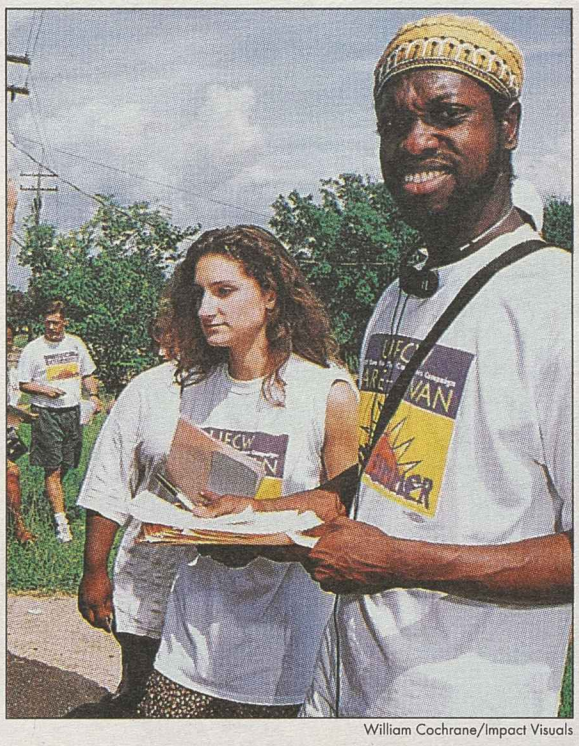
Working with the Electrical Workers in Seattle, activists actually shut down a nonunion hiring hall. They showed up on Friday and announced they would be back on Monday at 5 a.m. When they arrived, the hall shut down, effectively putting the nonunion operation out of business for a day.

"For a young person to feel the power of that had a huge effect," Levin told the council.

A three-week-long Southern bus tour leafleted dozens of nursing homes in the deep South as part of the UFCW's "Care for the Caregiver" campaign. Several organizing leads came out of the effort and, in one case, activists helped gather signatures on union cards from the majority of the workers.

About 200 of the participants now will go through the Organizing Institute. More than 50 activists were hired on the spot by unions to work on campaigns.

"The largest goal of Union Summer is to have an impact on the next generation, to get people to respect picket lines, to have unions and working people issues as a fundamental part of their politics," said Levin.



William Cochrane/Impact Visuals

Union Summer activists Helen Petrozzola and Kwame Welsh leaflet outside a Jackson, Miss., nursing home as part of the Southern bus tour.

RESOURCES

This Labor Day weekend, We Do the Work presents **Heroes, 3: Profiles from the American Workplace**. The one-hour public television special pays tribute to ordinary people who take action in times of adversity and make extraordinary contributions to society through their work. Check local listings for air times.

UNITE has released a compilation from Local 1077's **Whiteville Apparel Choir,** featuring a blend of gospel and labor music. Cassette tapes are $10. Contact UNITE — Choir Project, 1010 Tucker Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

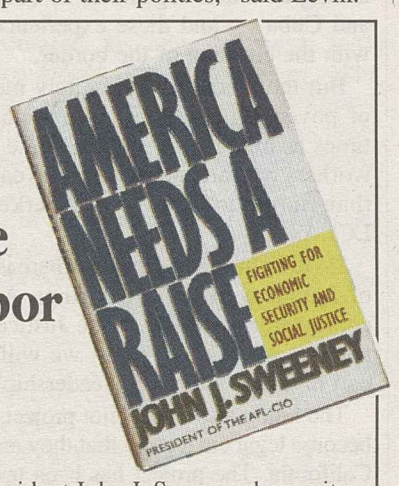
CONFERENCES

The biennial Child Labor Conference, **Children at Work: Exploitation Escalates**, will be held Sept. 8-10 at the Embassy Row Hotel in Washington. The conference will include sessions on domestic and international issues on school-to-work programs, corporate responsibility, international strategies on trade and development and occupational safety and health. Contact the National Consumers League, 1701 K St., N.W., Suite 1200, Washington, D.C. 20006; or via FAX at 202/835-0747.

Union Issues for Working Women, sponsored by the George Meany Center for Labor Studies Oct. 20-25, will explore new strategies and approaches to tap the enormous energy that millions of women can bring to the labor movement. The program will be held at the center's Silver Spring, Md., campus. Contact Diana Linton at 301/431-5420.

Dealing with Workplace Violence Institute will be sponsored by the George Meany Center for Labor Studies Oct. 13-18. Registration and room and board are $670. The cost for commuters is $110. Contact David G. Alexander at 301/431-5408.

Just in time for Labor Day



AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney has written a new book about the fight for economic security and social justice.

"America Needs A Raise," published by Houghton Mifflin, is an honest, easy-to-read explanation of how corporations and government have failed America's working families — and what we can do about it.

The book sketches Sweeney's rise from humble jobs in the Bronx, N.Y., to the leadership of the U.S. labor movement. Along the way, he developed a sense that workers have to stick together to build communities that nourish families and reward hard work.

His analysis of what has gone wrong in America is well documented, with facts and figures that testify to why "America Needs A Raise."

Sale proceeds will go to a special fund to help working Americans organize for higher living standards. You can find the book at your local book store. For more information, call the AFL-CIO Publications Division at 202-637-5010.

NEWSMAKERS

AFL-CIO President **John J. Sweeney** announced a major round of staff appointments during the summer Executive Council meeting in Chicago.

Ron Blackwell, chief economist at UNITE, will head the Corporate Affairs Department. **Bill Fletcher** leaves the Service Employees to become director of the Education Department and **Barbara Shailor,** international affairs director for the Machinists, will assume the same position at the federation.

Other key appointments in the Corporate Affairs Department include **David Chu**, former research director of SEIU, who will become director of strategic research. **Nancy Mills**, formerly of SEIU, will be acting director of the Center for Workplace Democracy, and **Bill Patterson**, corporate affairs specialist at the Teamsters, will direct the Center for Worker Ownership and Governance.

Dick Leonard, currently at the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers, will direct strategic campaign field operations as an assistant director in the Department of Field Mobilization. **(See stories, Pages 5-6).**

Elmer Chatak, president of the Industrial Union Department since 1992, retired on Aug. 5. IUD's Executive Council elected Secretary-Treasurer **Peter diCicco** to succeed Chatak as president and **Joseph B. Uehlein**, executive assistant to the president, as its secretary-treasurer.

Chatak, whose four-year term was not due to expire until November, stepped down early to give the new officers an early start with the ongoing department reorganization. He began his union career in 1951 when he was hired by Phillip Murray as a CIO organizer. After the AFL and CIO merger, he was transferred to the Steelworkers District 7 and became the district's key organizer. In 1968 he became the first director of the USWA's new organizing department.

DiCicco, who was elected secretary-treasurer in 1992, previously served as vice president of the Electronic Workers and IUE's New England District.

Uehlein previously served as IUD's director of Strategic Campaigns. He is also president of the Labor Heritage Foundation.

Robert F. Harbrant has retired as president of the AFL-CIO's Food and Allied Service Trades Department, a position he has held since 1979. He will be succeeded by Secretary-Treasurer **Jeffrey L. Fiedler** on Sept. 1.

Harbrant served as secretary-treasurer and first executive director of FAST as well as executive assistant and assistant to the secretary-treasurer in the Union Label and Service Trades Department. He will continue working with the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers.

Fiedler began his career at FAST as director of corporate affairs in 1980 and was appointed secretary-treasurer in 1990.

President Clinton celebrated his 50th birthday by blowing out his candles on a union-made cake from famed Greenberg Bakery in New York City. The employees have been members of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers since the shop opened in 1946. The huge butter cream-frosted pound cake, which was donated to the president by the bakery, took two days to prepare.

AFL-CIO economist **Greg Woodhead** was elected to the executive board of the Industrial Relations Research Association for a three-year term, beginning in 1997. The IRRA gives professionals interested in all aspects of industrial relations and human resources the opportunity to share ideas and learn about new developments, issues and practices in the field.

Ken Orsatti, national executive director of the Screen Actors Guild, was elected president of the California State Theatrical Federation, the entertainment arm of the California state federation. **Marjo Bernay** of the Theatrical Stage Employees Local 790 was named vice president, and **Edward Powell** from IATSE was elected secretary-treasurer.

DEATH

Lillian Clark, national treasurer of the Television and Radio Artists since 1991, died in New York City after battling cancer for many months. She was 70.

Clark was one of the original Ray Charles Singers and also appeared on the Perry Como show in the 1950s. She also recorded with Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Tommy Dorsey, Louis Armstrong, Sammy Davis Jr. and other musical legends.

She is survived by a son and a brother.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper



David Bacon/Impact Visuals

Latino workers march in Watsonville, Calif., to support an organizing drive among strawberry pickers by the Farm Workers, the fastest-growing union in the country.

Latinos, unions need each other

Labor making inroads with fast-growing group

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

Hispanic Americans, the fastest-growing segment of the work force, are finding out that unions can be instrumental in helping them work their way up the economic ladder.

"If diversity is an asset for America — and it is — it is even more of an asset for the labor movement," said AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. "America's unions are the best hope for winning higher wages, better benefits and more dignity for Latinos and other people of color."

Richard Bensinger, AFL-CIO organizing director, sees Latinos as key to the future of the labor movement. "The ranks of the movement cannot increase significantly without Latino workers," he said.

The number of Latinos in the work force will increase 75 percent by the year 2005, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. One out of six new workers will be Latino.

Labor's involvement with Hispanic workers dates back to the founding of the Farm Workers in the early 1960s. From the 1968 grape boycott to the Service Employees' Justice for Janitors demonstrations, unions have stood by Latinos in the workplace and in the halls of government.

Besides the Farm Workers, other unions with strong traditions in organizing Latinos are SEIU, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, UNITE and AFSCME. But as their numbers increase, Latinos are finding homes in other unions as well.

"Many of the most successful organizing drives have involved mostly Latino workers — the Laborers on Maryland's Eastern Shore, UNITE in Dallas, the Carpenters during the drywallers' campaign, and the Farm Workers, which is the fastest-growing union in the country today," Bensinger said. "The challenge to the labor movement is to recruit more Latino organizers."

A major voice for Latinos in the labor movement is the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, an AFL-CIO constituency group founded in 1972. Starting with a hundred delegates at its first convention, LCLAA hosted more than 1,000 delegates at its August convention in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Power through the union card and the ballot box is the message that LCLAA brings to Hispanic workers and their families, said LCLAA Executive Director Al Montoya. "Many Hispanics have made big contributions to our nation in labor, business, politics, the arts, sports and other fields. But there are many more — unemployed and underemployed — who are denied such opportunities."

The key is to provide good, steady jobs at decent pay to help Latinos make a full contribution to the economy and society, he explained.

Young Latinos are ready and willing, as this year's Union Summer revealed. "We have between 100 to 200 Latinos in Union Summer," said Andy Levin, the program director. "We recruited at predominantly Hispanic colleges like Arizona State, San Francisco State University, Brookland Community College, the University of Texas at San Antonio and Los Angeles Community College."

Several Latino recruits already are working with the UFW organizing strawberry pickers in Watsonville, Calif. Eight Latinos also serve as Union Summer field staff directors.

Still, unions have a long way to go to break through to Latino workers. "They know Cesar Chavez but they don't know about Linda Chavez-Thompson and Dolores Huerta," said Tania Rosaria, assistant coordinator for the Washington and Sacramento, Calif., Union Summer sites.

"Although it's hard to reach out to Latinos because there is no such thing as historically Latino colleges," she said, "the labor movement must put information in Spanish because it shows a sense of pride and respect."

Unions also must recognize cultural and background differences. Many immigrants witnessed the killing of union organizers in countries like Mexico and Cuba — and these experiences don't disappear with the crossing of the border.

But the union card definitely means an escape out of poverty for Latinos, whose poverty rate is three times as high as the rate for white families. Hispanic workers who are union members earn 50 percent more than nonunion Hispanic workers, according to LCLAA.

"Within building services, there is a large percentage of Latino workers," said Anna Aviles, immigration coordinator for SEIU. "The Justice for Janitors campaign is an ongoing effort we will continue to do as part of a new vision and leadership" within the union.

The union also has a pilot project to help immigrants become legal citizens so that they are eligible to vote in California. The project has been tested, and the union hopes to expand it to other areas and to include Asians.

California unions have joined Latinos to fight divisive initiatives like Proposition 187, which would prohibit immigrants from receiving public aid and attending public schools. Although the proposition passed, enforcement is forbidden until courts render judgement on several lawsuits.

With immigrant-bashing and attacks on affirmative action on the rise, these coalitions are becoming more important. Miguel Carreras, the newly elected executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles AFL-CIO, was able to arrange the first meeting between Latino leaders and African-American ministers in Los Angeles.

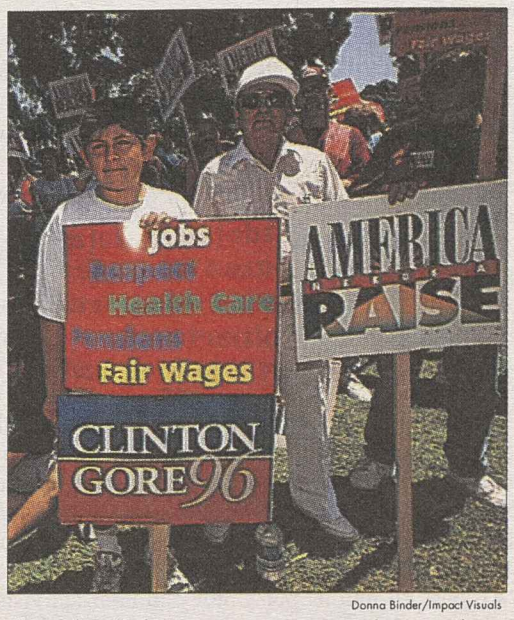
"Unfortunately, everybody has been fighting for the crumbs," said David Sickler of the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department. "This alliance will make our coalitions much stronger."

Those strengthened ties are evident in the planning for the Oct. 12 national Latino and immigrant civil rights march. The AFL-CIO, its affiliated unions and constituency groups are major contributers.

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 14 AUGUST 26, 1996

INSIDE



Donna Binder/Impact Visuals

The Labor '96 campaign, organized around workers' issues, won a big victory when President Clinton signed the minimum wage increase. **See stories, Page 1.**

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LEGISLATION

4 *Unions fight attacks on Social Security*

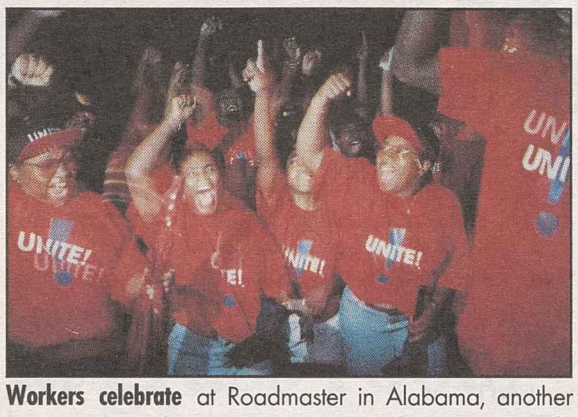
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AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 16 SEPTEMBER 23, 1996



Workers celebrate at Roadmaster in Alabama, another organizing win for UNITE in the South. **See story, Page 2.**

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Delegates to the Democratic convention in Chicago demonstrate that "America Needs A Raise."

Worker issues front and center

Labor '96 puts stamp on political campaign

By Michael Byrne
Chicago

More than 800 AFL-CIO union delegates to the Democratic National Convention helped launch President Clinton's campaign for a second term, putting the issues of working families squarely at the front of the national debate.

In the first address by an AFL-CIO president to a political party convention, John J. Sweeney spoke plainly about the political aspirations of millions of working families.

"They don't want to run the Congress, or the White House or the political parties," he said. "They want to be compensated and respected for the contributions they make. They want to send their children to decent schools. They want to go to a safe workplace every day. They want a doctor when they need one, a little rest when they are weary, and a pension after a lifetime of work."

Delegates punctuated Sweeney's speech with chants of "America Needs A Raise," waving signs that also called for Good Jobs, Secure Pensions, Health Care and Education. Demonstrations on these worker issues were held throughout the convention, which contrasted the Democratic Party's stands with the clearly anti-worker agenda put forward by the Newt Gingrich-led Congress and adopted by the Republican Party at its convention earlier in San Diego.

At a meeting of labor delegates before the convention opened, Vice President Gore thanked union members for their support and said pointedly, "We are on your side. We need to stick together because the stakes have never been higher."

While national media attention was drawn here for the nomination of Clinton and Gore, the real story was unfolding in congressional districts across the country, where Labor '96 coordinators were mobilizing

Continued on Page 5

IAM Mac pact secures jobs, raises wages

'Global competition' doesn't stand scrutiny

By James B. Parks

The Machinists won a major victory at McDonnell Douglas on issues that affect many U.S. workers — pension, job security and wages — with the help of a united labor front and a strategy that exposed the fallacious corporate "global economy" excuse.

"The McDonnell Douglas workers proved that working people can build a better future, if they have the organization and courage to make a stand," IAM President George J. Kourpias said. "People don't have to be victims of job exports or low wages. This is an important lesson and a major victory for workers everywhere."

Some 6,700 members of IAM District 837 began returning to work at the aerospace manufacturer Sept. 16, five days after ratifying a new five-year contract that makes what the union called "sweeping improvements in job security, retiree benefits and wages."

"Standing up together, we won the same basic job security protections the Boeing machinists won in their strike last fall," said Jerry Oulson, president of IAM District 837 in St. Louis. "We won the best pension benefits in U.S. aerospace, a '30-and-out' retirement plan and improved wages and insurance. Our members can be very proud of what they've accomplished and return to their jobs stronger, more united and with their heads held high."

The agreement "shows that even in an era of economic transition, labor and management can resolve tough issues like job security if they are willing to work together," Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich said.

Some 2,000 temporary replacement workers hired by the defense contractor were terminated Sept. 11, the day the pact was ratified, the company said. Strikers will be credited with time on strike for seniority purposes. The employees walked out June 5 at McDonnell Douglas's St. Louis plant after rejecting the company's contract offer. The key issue in the talks was McDonnell's increasing use of outside contractors and the transfer of some work to nonunion plants in Mesa, Ariz., and Macon, Ga.

The new contract, ratified by a 2-1 margin, came

Continued on Page 9

Local union leaders make tough choices, learn to grow

By Muriel H. Cooper

Union representation among grocery store workers in Dayton, Ohio, more than doubled over the past five years, from 33 percent to 74 percent, from 3,500 members to 7,500.

It took a lot of effort and a lot of money, recalls Lenny Wyatt, president of Food and Commercial Workers Local 1099. "We had to restore viability to the local. We had a lot of card checks. We spent in excess of $1 million organizing," he said.

The union's presence is clearly visible in Dayton today, and it has paid off.

When the Meijer grocery chain expanded into Dayton, executives cautiously eyed the pickets in front of their competitor, Cubs stores. Rather than fight determined workers like those who had maintained a three-year picket line at Cubs, Meijer took a neutral position and let their employees decide for themselves if they wanted to join the union.

"When Meijer saw we were aggressive, well-established and had community credibility, they backed down," Wyatt said.

There are lessons in the Dayton experience that the AFL-CIO Organizing Department is hoping to spread around the labor movement. A key vehicle for that exchange is the AFL-CIO Elected Leaders Task Force, which met in Chicago recently to share ideas.

Wyatt was one of the participants, as was Michael Pieti, who hopes to use some of Wyatt's tips to rebuild union membership in the faltering mill industry. Membership in Carpenters Local 2737, which Pieti heads, has dropped from 28,000 members in 1985 to 15,000 today. "We have a hell of a problem," he said.

"We've had a lot of loss because of the constraints on raw material and technology. But that's not to say there aren't many workers out there who should be organized, and that's who we have to go after."

Pieti realizes that the message is "money, membership and motivation. "We have people who are just glad to be working for $9 an hour, because that beats working at the Mini-Mart," he said.

The 53 elected union leaders at the Chicago retreat talked candidly about the obstacles and solutions for organizing workers. "It was a fascinating discussion," said AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger. "The leaders challenged each other and

Continued on Page 4

ORGANIZING

IBT Overnite success

Workers at the Overnite Transportation Co. terminal in Memphis, Tenn., voted 219-201 for Teamsters representation Sept. 16, although 23 ballots were challenged by the company.

The Memphis terminal is the second-largest facility at Overnite, which has been the subject of a nationwide organizing drive by the IBT since 1994.

So far, IBT has won 18 Overnite elections to represent 2,000 workers, with 15 other elections in dispute. The company employs about 14,000 workers, of whom about 10,000 are eligible for IBT representation.

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, IBT Local 572 won an election to represent the 467 maintenance workers employed by Whitewood Oriental Maintenance Co. at the L.A. Airport. The vote was 289-62. Most of the workers earned only $4.25 and received no medical insurance or pension.

Try, try again

The Teamsters plucked victory from the jaws of defeat in two recent organizing campaigns.

Flight attendants at ComAir, who in June appeared to be 11 votes short of the majority they needed to gain IBT representation, celebrated a win after 15 ballots postmarked before the deadline, but not delivered by the U.S. Postal Service, finally were received, giving the union the majority of votes needed to declare victory.

The flight attendants, based in Cincinnati and Orlando, Fla., cited dissatisfaction with wages and working conditions as their reason for seeking IBT representation.

Meanwhile, in Modesto, Calif., workers at the Atwater Canning Co. voted 349-273 for representation by the IBT after falling 32 votes short of winning their union in a 1990 vote.

The victory was part of a renewed drive by the workers and the union to improve benefits, working conditions and wages.

ALPA gets Spirit

Spirit Airlines pilots have voted for representation by the Air Line Pilots. Of the 86 eligible pilots, 60 percent voted for ALPA.

Spirit, based in East Pointe, Mich., provides charter service as well as scheduled service to markets in Michigan, New Jersey, Florida and Massachusetts.

Musicians in groove

After a seven-month organizing drive, musicians at the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra voted by mail ballot 63-18 to be represented by Musicians Local 205. The votes were counted at the end of July.

The campaign was coordinated by the union's newly established Organizing and Education Department.

USWA's precious cargo

Some 450 school bus drivers in Nashville, Tenn. voted Sept. 3 for representation by the Steelworkers.

The mostly female drivers organized around stronger safety measures, an end to overcrowding and unfair distribution of routes and fairer treatment for workers by the school district.

Union's Southern strategy pays off

By Muriel H. Cooper

Workers at Kitchen of the Ocean shrimp processing plant in Deerfield, Fla., voted overwhelmingly for UNITE representation, as the union continued marching through the South, racking up victory after impressive victory.

The 173-18 vote for UNITE representation is the 15th win in 17 organizing drives in the southeastern states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina and South Carolina since mid-March, adding 2,500 new members to UNITE's rolls.

"Workers across the South are organizing for more empowerment in the workplace," said UNITE President Jay Mazur.

UNITE! UNION OF NEEDLETRADES, INDUSTRIAL AND TEXTILE EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO, CLC

Southern workers see themselves in the midst of a growing crisis as they work harder each day for less and less, said Bruce Raynor, executive vice president and Southern regional director of UNITE. They want a better future for themselves and their families, he said.

Workers at the shrimp plant, mostly Haitian women, had to deal with a particularly aggressive anti-union campaign that included hired union busters and the firing of three supporters the day of the election.

"We were tired of being treated worse and paid less than non-Haitian workers," said Virginia Pierre, a peeler at the plant. "I've been here nine years, and today I feel like we've finally won the respect we've deserved for so long."

AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger credits UNITE's "great strategy and dedication" for the string of Southern victories. "But they couldn't get there without the commitment of resources and their members. Their victories are directly tied in with their structure."

"Workers are looking for an alternative, and they see that our union is ready to roll up our sleeves and get in the trenches for the fight," said Monica Russo, UNITE's Southern region organization director. "People are ready to take on their employers and win."

Such was the case at the Roadmaster Corp. in Opelika, Ala., where workers cast a 343-150 vote for UNITE.

The workers began organizing in June, citing a need for affordable health insurance, livable wages and respect on the shop floor. Workers at the plant were dismissed when Roadmaster bought Diversified Products in 1994 and then rehired for as much as $2 an hour less and with fewer benefits.

"The workers at Roadmaster have let it be known loud and clear that they're ready for a change," said Joe Gaines, a UNITE organizer. "The company tried every trick in the book to keep the workers from forming their union, but this crowd stood tough and stayed focused on justice," he said.

Roadmaster workers make Thighmaster and other exercise equipment.

Perhaps the biggest gain for UNITE has been in the nursing home industry in Florida, where the mostly female and immigrant work force is faced with low wages, lack of benefits and lack of respect.

The union has won four out of six of those organizing drives, including its most recent at Miami's Dania Nursing Home, where workers voted by a 3-1 margin for the union. The unit will include certified nursing assistants and housekeeping, laundry and dietary workers.

The victory culminates a campaign that lasted more than a year, as Nashville officials repeatedly tried to stop the organizing effort and bus drivers refused to give up. They waged a legal battle for their right to organize and used school board meetings to rally hundreds of union supporters to their cause.

Organizing the privatized

Service Employees Local 503 in Oregon won two organizing victories recently to represent workers whose jobs have been moved from the public sector to the private sector.

Some 120 direct-care workers at the Oregon Supported Living Program in Eugene and 45 direct-care workers at a group home in Corvallis have joined the local.

Patience paid off

Two SEIU units have found out that all good things do come to those who wait.

After an organizing campaign of several months, SEIU Local 767 won an election to represent 270 technical employees at Good Samaritan Hospital in Brockton, Mass. The unit also has filed for election to represent the hospital's service and maintenance unit of more than 500 workers.

In took two years in Niagara County, N.Y., but 130 technicians at the Cerebral Palsy Association finally voted to join Local 652. The local now is working to represent almost 1,000 technical employees at Children's Hospital in Buffalo.

Go-go SEIU

Exotic dancers at San Francisco's Lusty Lady Theater voted 57-15 in early September to be represented by SEIU. The workers were concerned with job seniority, shift scheduling, working conditions, wages and health insurance.

Sporting "Union Yes" garter belts, the dancers began organizing after they realized that customers were videotaping them from behind the one-way mirrors through which the dancers are viewed, and that their images were showing up on the Internet and in videos.

Union turns wheel in Ohio

After a year of being faced with employer hostility, workers at Carborundum Grinding Wheel Co. in Logan, Ohio, voted 40-35 for Mine Workers representation.

UMWA President Cecil Roberts praised the solidarity of the Carborundum workers, and also pointed to the effectiveness of the union's new organizing approach. "We're taking advantage of our rank-and-file members who are the best possible people to explain to unorganized workers the benefits of belonging to a union."

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Labor '96 is pinching foes at grass roots

By Mike Hall

Labor '96 is in full swing, keeping the heat on wayward members of Congress to change their positions on issues of importance to working families.

The latest AFL-CIO grass-roots lobbying advertisements focus on the votes by House members to cut education and college loans as part of the Republican 1996 budget plan. A presidential veto killed the budget, which would have cut college student loans by $10 billion and exacted huge cuts from Head Start and the Safe and Drug Free schools program.

In Connecticut, Rep. Gary Franks (R) ducked 100 students at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, who sought to confront him at a Sept. 19 forum over his votes to cut student loans.

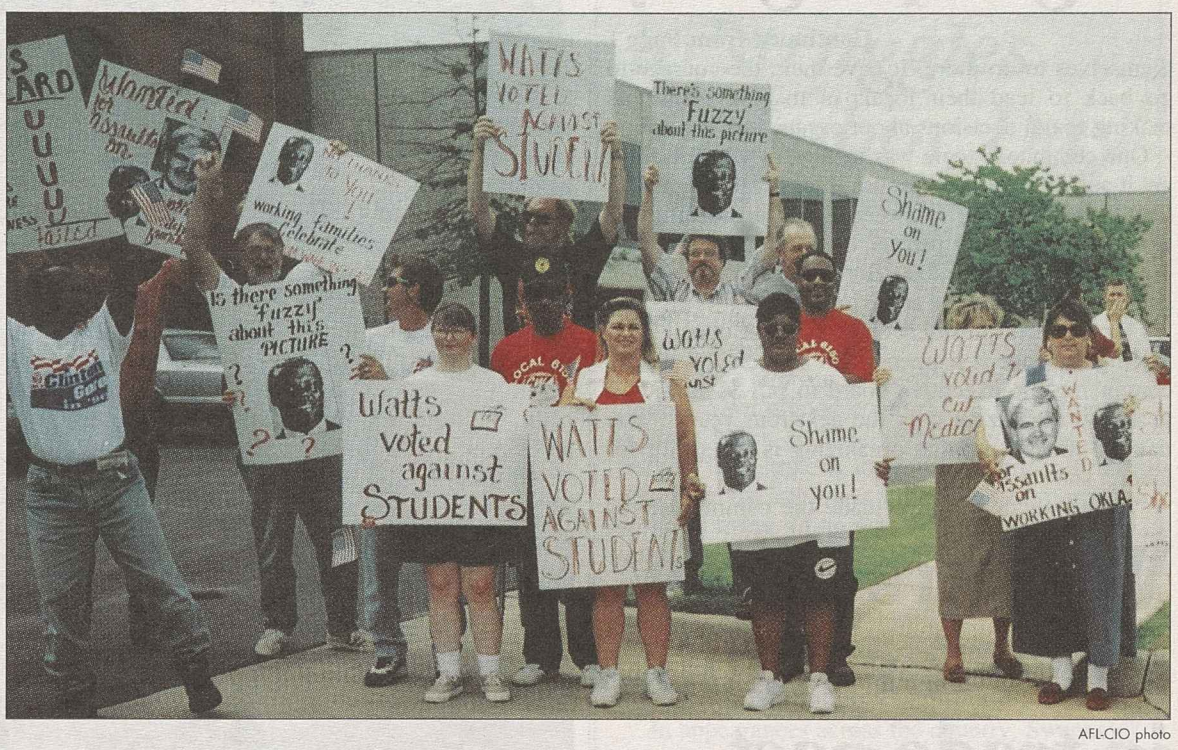
Justin Molito, a senior at Western Connecticut and one of the forum moderators, is fresh off the Union Summer Southern Bus Tour to help organize nursing homes in the South. After returning home, the 23-year-old joined Labor '96 and helped establish Youth for Justice on Western's campus.

"The response has been great, especially because of the student loans. It hits students right in the pocketbook," Molito said. "They have a hard time believing someone would vote against education, but you show them the record."

College tuition has jumped three times as fast as household income in the past 14 years, and the growing income gap between the rich and working families has made it a struggle for working families to send their kids to school.

The student loan ads, which are airing on television and radio in 32 districts, feature Carolyn and John Friedman of Philadelphia. They tell viewers, "Next year we will have two children in college and it will be very hard to put them through — even with two incomes."

Yet as the ad points out, "Congressman _____ voted with Newt Gingrich to cut college loans while giving tax breaks to the wealthy. To take away opportunities for children to go to college is a crime . . . Tell him his priorities are all wrong."



AFL-CIO photo

Labor and community activists demonstrate in front of Rep. J. C. Watts' office in Norman, Okla.

The Speaker of the House, author of the GOP "Contract With America," continues to anger trade unionists. A Sept. 9 fundraiser with Gingrich and Franks drew some 500 protesters, said Warren Gould, Labor '96 coordinator in Connecticut's 5th District. "We were able to sign up nearly 200 new volunteers. It totally energized us," Gould said.

In Western Kentucky, the Gingrich name also was a magnet. Trade union members have followed Rep. Ed Whitfield (R) to four county courthouse meetings to expose his record, carrying signs that claim he should earn the "Best Supporting Oscar for Supporting Newt 91 Percent of the Time."

In Chattanooga, Tenn., labor, community and religious activists made Friday, Sept. 13, an unlucky day for Rep. Zach Wamp (R). Some 50 people rallied in front of his office to criticize his votes to cut education and Medicare and allow raids on their pension funds.

That followed a late August demonstration in which several dozen protestors marched in front of Wamp's downtown office and distributed fliers charging Wamp "dropped the ball on education" when he backed the 1996 GOP House budget.

The emphasis on education follows a second round of television and radio ads reiterating the GOP's attempt to slash $270 billion from Medicare last year. The ads responded to what AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney called "shamefully dishonest television commercials" paid for by the Republicans that falsely claimed Medicare benefits would increase under the GOP proposals, and urged those members to change their positions.

Activists throughout the country also are going door-to-door to meet with union members and their families. The "Labor Neighbor" program kicked off Sept. 14 in California's sprawling 1st District, which stretches north of San Francisco to the Oregon border and inland to the wine country.

About 20 union members went door-to-door and were able to talk to about 200 union families, said Gary Greer, the district campaign coordinator. After telling workers about Republican efforts to take away hard-won gains through Davis-Bacon repeal, job safety cutbacks and the TEAM Act, the activists left with the admonition that "you could sit out this election, but it could cost you," he said.

Racing toward adjournment, Congress cutting corners

Spending bills are the last items on the agenda for the 104th Congress as it speeds toward a late September adjournment target. Several key labor issues remain in play.

The Labor/Health and Human Services fiscal 1997 appropriations bill (H.R. 3755) will be the main battleground for such worker issues as workplace safety, training and education. The Treasury/Postal spending bill (H.R. 3756) could threaten the rights of union representatives in two government agencies, and an immigration bill has an objectionable provision that denies education to children of illegal immigrants.

Any unfinished appropriations measures are expected to be folded into one omnibus spending bill or continuing resolution so that lawmakers and President Clinton can avoid the kind of stalemate that last year caused two shutdowns of the federal government. It appears the Labor/HHS bill will be part of a continuing resolution.

The Senate Appropriations Committee reported a Labor/HHS bill Sept. 12 that included smaller cuts and fewer objectionable riders than the House version approved in July. But it still drew criticism and a White House veto threat.

The House bill eliminated funding for Goals 2000, a program to improve the performance of public schools, and the Healthy Start program that seeks to reduce infant mortality. It also included cuts in funding for the National Labor Relations Board and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. A provision to ban OSHA from researching and issuing new ergonomic rules was stripped from the bill.

The Senate version allocated money for Goals 2000 and Healthy Start, eliminated the 15 percent House cut for the NLRB and increased OSHA's funding over the House bill. However, funds for OSHA and the Mine Safety and Health Administration fall below the Clinton administration's requests, and the OSHA budget in fact is lower than 1996 levels.

The White House protested OSHA funding levels and the cuts in a Department of Labor program aimed at eliminating sweatshops.

The funding levels for education and employment and training don't meet the administration's request, meaning some 250,000 individuals — including 134,000 disadvantaged youths in the summer jobs program, 81,000 dislocated workers and 35,000 disadvantaged adults — would be denied training and employment services.

"These cuts are especially shortsighted considering the strict new requirements in the welfare reform legislation to prepare welfare recipients to move into work," an Office of Management and Budget letter said. The OMB will recommend a veto if the bill remains in its current form.

Senate leaders plan to seek an amendment to the bill to add $3.1 billion for education and training.

"Republicans are in a hurry to leave town, but school's not out until we meet the educational needs of our children," said Senate Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.).

While the Labor/HHS bill was reported without any amendments handcuffing OSHA's efforts to address new workplace ergonomic rules, such an amendment might well be offered when the measure comes up for floor action. The House bill attacks workers with an amendment to ban the use of "official time" — the time union reps spend on labor-management programs and other representational activities — at the Social Security Administration and the Health Care Financing Administration.

"This blatant anti-worker effort is another attack in the recent assault on unions and is in obvious retaliation for labor's efforts to educate both its membership and all working Americans on the issues most affecting their standard of living," Legislative Director Peggy Taylor said.

Official time is used when a federal employee is acting as a union representative and may be used only on such things as contract negotiations, grievance handling and labor-management cooperative efforts to improve service quality, efficiency and delivery. It cannot be used for such internal union business as organizing, union elections or partisan politics.

In the federal government, official time came about when a 1978 law required federal unions to represent all employees in the bargaining unit regardless of whether they joined the union. At the same time, it banned the unions from collecting fees for the representational activities they provide to nonmembers. But Congress did allow unions to negotiate for the use of official time with federal agencies.

Official and or "company" time is commonly negotiated in the private sector as well as at state and local government levels.

House and Senate negotiators will determine what funding levels and other provisions will be included in the Labor/HHS portion of the continuing resolution, and if amendments will be allowed.

On the immigration front, UNITE, the Service Employees and other unions have objected to provisions in an illegal immigration bill (H.R. 2202) that would deny public education to the children of illegal immigrants and could deny certain benefits to legal immigrants and their relatives.

The bill also requires legal immigrants to meet certain income levels before they would be allowed to sponsor a relative, including a spouse or child, for entry into the United States. If that income level fell, neither they nor their relatives would be allowed welfare benefits.

That bill is in a House/Senate conference and it is unclear whether an agreement will be reached that would bring it to the floor.

— Mike Hall

Organizing keys: money, members, motivation

Continued from Page 1

themselves to do more. It gave them the courage to go back to lead their locals in making plans and making tough decisions about organizing."

One continuous topic was money — where do you get it and how do you best use it for organizing. AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney has urged affiliated unions to devote 30 percent of their budgets toward organizing by the year 2000. But that will require a major change in union culture at the local level.

Flora Walker, president of AFSCME Council 25 in Michigan, made it happen when she left the retreat, convincing the executive board to put $1 million a year into organizing over the next four years. "You have to understand that organizing is the savior for labor," she said.

"Even though we have made the commitment to allocate 15 percent of our budget to organizing and 20 percent the next year, it's scary," said Kristy Semersheim, executive secretary for Service Employees Local 715 in San Jose, Calif. "But we know we have to do this, because if we don't, we won't have a labor movement."

Next year, Local 715 plans to transfer two servicing staff members to organizing and is allocating another $50,000 to pay for release time for member organizers.

Member education plays an important role in the organizing process, said David Didier, secretary-treasurer for UFCW Local 135 in San Diego.

The UFCW local produced an educational campaign on protecting the union's share of the market and the effect on bargaining when the share erodes. "We used a short video and mailed it to our members. The message hit home," Didier said.

"We were also able to bargain that when our pension fund is fully funded, 15 cents will go back to members, who have agreed to give half of that to the superfund. We're talking $3.5 million for organizing in Southern California, over a four-year contract," he said.

"The AFL-CIO must drive home the importance of organizing, but a lot of things must happen at the local level," he said. "If I didn't get anything else out of the retreat, I got that message. There must be a rededication of allocated resources at the local level."

To help locals restructure to foster organizing, the AFL-CIO Elected Leadership Task Force on Organizing published *Organizing for Change — Changing to Organize!* The manual is a springboard for self-examination, discussion and action. It is available from the AFL-CIO Organizing Department at 202/639-6203.

Workers renew drive for rights in trade pact

By David Kameras

The AFL-CIO has reiterated its demand that worker rights be an essential part of trade negotiations, and that the issue be pressed at the ministerial meeting of the new World Trade Organization in Singapore in early December.

"If we want the global economy to be a source of stability and growth, not chaos and division, we must address the pain, the anxiety and the basic needs of working people," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiations, the most prominent private-sector trade advisory panel to President Clinton.

"Trade policy and trade negotiations aren't just about tariffs or quotas," Sweeney said Sept. 11. "They are about people and jobs. And they are about the decisions government makes that help or hurt people who are trying to make their way in the fast-changing and unforgiving global economy."

The committee, which is mostly made up of CEOs of major U.S. corporations, but also includes AFL-CIO Vice Presidents Jay Mazur and Lenore Miller, was told that existing agreements fall far short of providing fairness to American workers, businesses and consumers.

"There are huge differences in tariff levels, labor and environmental conditions and government practices," Sweeney said. "America can't accept this anymore. If we are going to have free trade, we must have fair trade."

"We want people to show the same concern for people as for property," he said. "We want to empower workers, not just corporations. And we recognize that government still must help to make sure that the benefits of trade are widely distributed."

Sweeney and Mazur, who chairs the Executive Council's Trade Committee, also met separately with Acting U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and her senior staff to press for an all-out effort to advance worker rights and labor standards before the WTO, which grew out of the long-running General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Barshefsky reiterated that these issues are of vital importance, and said the administration will do its utmost to secure approval of a working party under the WTO's auspices.

The WTO initiative was the subject earlier this month of a trade mission to the Southern Cone led by Luis Anderson, general secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Union's Latin American sector, ORIT, and including Barbara Shailor, AFL-CIO International Affairs Director.

Meeting with labor, economic and foreign ministers in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, as well as with Brazilian President Fernando Enrique Cardozo, the group proposed that WTO member countries be subject to a regular review of their observance of international labor standards, while receiving assistance from a special international social fund to raise and implement those standards.

The Latin American mission reflected "the total consensus from workers in the hemisphere that they need to be represented in the talks," Shailor said, noting that the rights issue united workers from both industrial and developing nations, which have historically opposed linking worker rights with trade.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Dan McCurry, director of the Foul Ball Campaign, shows the inside of a soccer ball stitched by children.

Child labor foes making inroads

By Muriel H. Cooper

Child labor continues to escalate, but the fight against the practice has energized a new generation of social activists and served to educate consumers.

That was the mixed message coming out of the Child Labor Coalition's three-day conference in Washington.

The International Labor Organization estimates that more than 73 million children ages 10-14 were "economically active" in 1995.

"The fact that so many organizations that fought for child labor law a century ago are now returning with renewed vigor to this same issue most certainly indicates that there is a problem," said Linda F. Golodner, co-chair of the coalition.

The good news is that since its conference two years ago, the coalition of trade unionists, child and human rights advocates and community groups has made major inroads in educating consumers about the abusive nature of child labor.

The organization pointed to two campaigns that are opening the eyes of consumers worldwide — RUGMARK, which clearly identifies hand-knotted carpets made free of child labor, and Foul Ball, which is negotiating with the International Federation of Football Association to guarantee that children do not stitch together FIFA-approved soccer balls.

"You see, there's a 'cause and effect' here," U.S. Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich told the conference. "You turned up the heat and you got results."

Conference attendees also discussed child labor in the agriculture industry, street trades such as domestic service and prostitution and how to safeguard children working door-to-door sales, lawn care and in the entertainment industry.

What ties all of this together, said Neil Kearney, general secretary for the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation, is the issue of worker rights, which is essential to understanding child labor. He called for a consistent approach in dealing with low wages, health and safety issues and hours of work.

To effectively deal with the issue of worker rights around the globe, it must be a part of the discussion in international trade, said Greg Woodhead, an AFL-CIO economist.

Safety woes dog federal contractors

The federal government spent nearly $40 billion in 1994 on contractors with dismal safety records.

A recent General Accounting Office report documented the practice, noting that 261 federal contractors were issued significant penalties by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for alleged safety and health violations in fiscal 1994.

Those contractors received more than $1 of every $5 paid by the federal government in contract money that year.

The GAO said it considered all proposed penalties of more than $15,000 to be "significant;" OSHA said only 3 percent of the employers it cited in that time period faced proposed penalties of $15,000 or more.

A total of 35 workers were killed and 85 injured at work sites operated by the contractors, according to the report, "Occupational Safety and Health: Violations of Safety and Health Regulations by Federal Contractors."

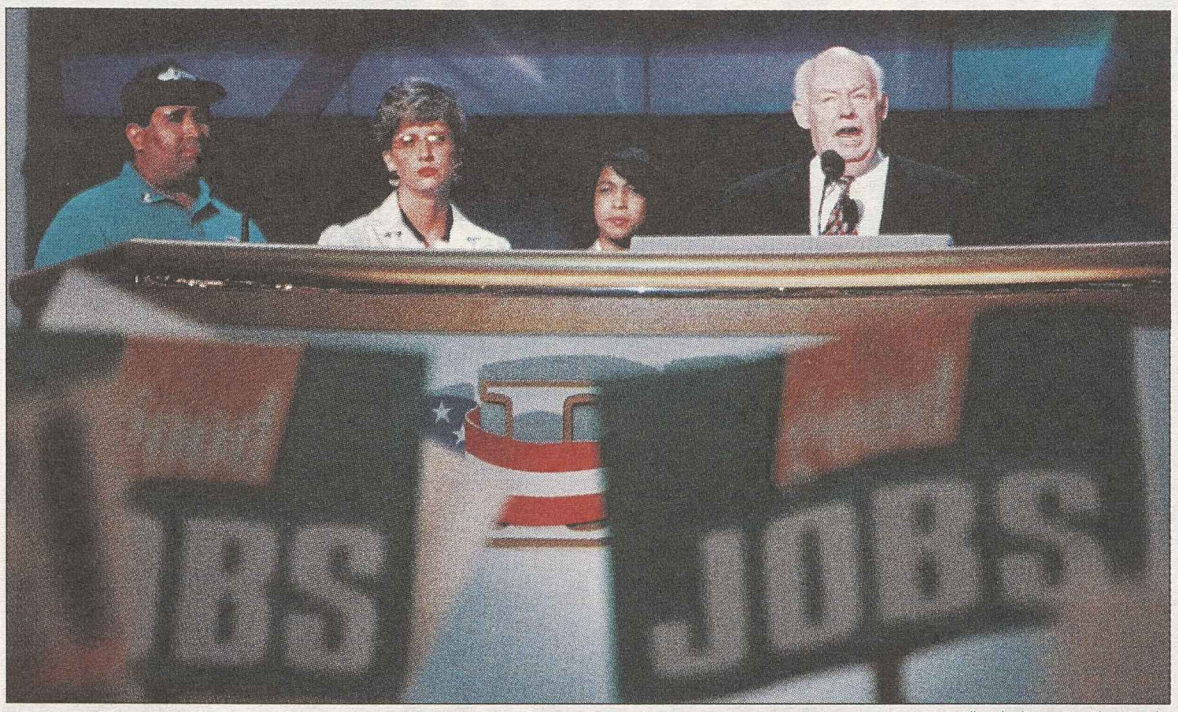
Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), who requested the study along with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), has proposed debarring federal contractors for up to three years when they violate job safety and other labor-related regulations, but his attempt to attach the proposal to GOP-sponsored OSHA legislation in the spring failed.

The report noted that most of the contractors with the egregious safety records were awarded contracts from the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy and NASA.

The GAO urged OSHA to focus on federal contractors who might be operating dangerous work sites — for example, the agency should consider whether the presence of federal contracts should place the employer on OSHA's priority inspection list.

In a statement released with the report, Simon said "it is not unreasonable" for such contractors to be held to a higher standard because they already are required to meet affirmative action and other federal requirements beyond those applied to nonfederal contractors.

— Colleen M. O'Neill



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Sharing the stage with AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney at the Democratic National Convention were three United Center workers, members of the Service Employees.

Working women's vote crucial

Continued from Page 1

union members to get out and vote to reverse the anti-worker tide in Congress. **(See story, Page 3)**.

The grass-roots effort this year is paying special attention to working women, who have been ignored too often in the past. The federation's Working Women Vote '96 project, organized by the Working Women's Department along with 9to5, a nonpartisan organization, will be reaching out to all working women during a nationwide action week Oct. 4-11.

"Women are the key swing constituency this year," said Karen Nussbaum, who heads the department. "In 1992, the women's vote was a deciding factor in the election. But in 1994, women didn't turn out, particularly low-income working women. We want to mobilize these women to vote in 1996."

The centerpiece of the campaign is reaching out to women where they spend most of their time — in grocery stores or shopping malls, at day care centers, in union halls and at union worksites. Voter registration/GOTV events will be held in about 100 communities with about 10,000 women activists participating nationwide.

"These women are union members and their best friends," Nussbaum said. "White-collar and blue-collar women. No-collar, no-income women who cook, clean and care for the kids so the husband can work two jobs. Retired, and just plain tired. They've been left out of the political process."

Special activities by unions during Working Women Vote week include the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers' plan to provide cake they will hand out to women during lunch hour if they register or sign a pledge to vote. And the Flight Attendants have launched an unprecedented push to register their members.

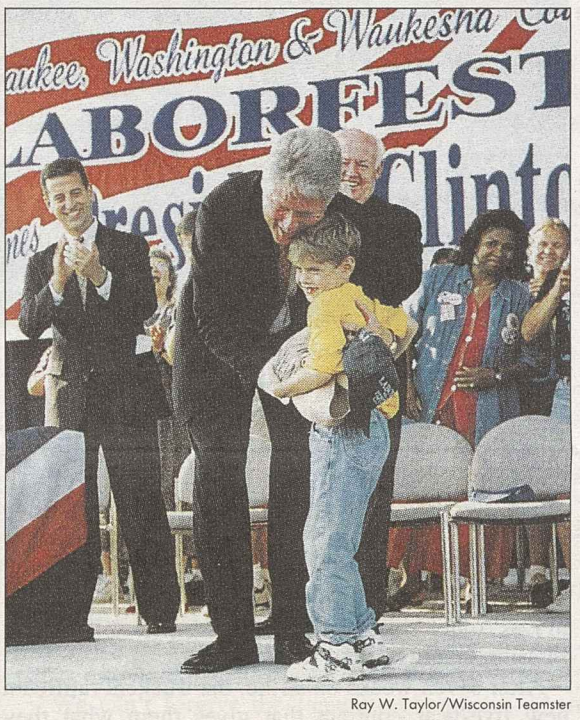
Labor '96, which was launched at a special convention in March with a $35 million pledge by AFL-CIO unions, is underscored by television and radio ads in selected congressional districts aimed at persuading legislators to change their positions on issues of importance to working families.

In Chicago, Sweeney unveiled a new round of ads in 27 districts where the incumbents had voted to slash Medicare, and then "falsely claimed Medicare benefits would increase under their proposals." The federation also launched ads in selected districts highlighting legislators' votes against the student loan program.

These messages, combined with earlier ads on the minimum wage and pensions, have incensed Republican Party officials, who have filed a series of nuisance complaints with the Federal Election Commission and sent threatening letters to television and radio stations running AFL-CIO ads. That is a sure sign the federation's campaign is on target, Sweeney said.

Five FEC complaints have been filed since the federation announced its campaign in March. Sweeney dismissed them as an effort by the Republican leadership "to distract public attention from their poor record on working family issues."

"The other side is not very happy," Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich told labor delegates before the convention got under way, "and it's a credit to your campaign to expose the voting record of the Newt Gingrich-Bob Dole Congress.



Ray W. Taylor/Wisconsin Teamster

President Clinton hugs Andy Busalacchi, son of Teamster Frank Busalacchi, during a Labor Day event in Milwaukee.

"When Gingrich's 'Contract With America' was unveiled, unions were the only people who stood up and were counted," Reich said. "You have reminded them that the paycheck is the most important family value."

That was the role of union delegates to the convention, Sweeney said. "As labor delegates and representatives from America's unions, our central mission will be to persistently and consistently raise the issues our members care about most — jobs and the economy, health care, retirement and pension security, education, and respect and rewards for the work we do," he said.

The workers' message also was carried to the convention floor by AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee, who lambasted GOP leaders in Congress for trying to block the Family and Medical Leave Act and to drastically cut the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

"At a time when nearly half a million Americans die on the job each year, Republicans are working overtime, if you will, to exempt workplaces from just routine safety inspections," said McEntee, who heads the federation's Political Committee.

Machinists President George J. Kourpias, addressing a progressive policy forum sponsored by the Campaign for America's Future, praised Clinton for standing up to the GOP onslaught. "The labor movement could not have withstood the assault by GOP leaders if the president had not intervened to defend working families."

He urged activists to "dress up Bill Clinton with coattails," to help elect a Congress that he can work with in a second term.

The focus of the AFL-CIO's activities as Election Day neared is to educate union members and mobilize them to vote. Candidate comparisons highlighting stands on labor issues, will be distributed in late September.

Unions point to struggles on Labor Day

Hellraising figured into this Labor Day holiday, as AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney and Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka kicked off the festivities by being arrested along with 19 others for blocking the entrance to The Detroit News.

"Believe me, you're going to win and you're going to get a good contract," he told striking Detroit News and Free Press employees at a rally. "This strike is the most important strike and the most important struggle we have in our country today. In no way will the labor movement fail you."

The arrests marked a shift in strategy by the strikers, who plan more acts of civil disobedience that will result in misdemeanor arrests, said Al Derey, president of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions.

In appearances across the country, Sweeney, Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson extolled labor's new activism and urged workers to use their power and vote their interests in November.

Labor "is building a dynamic new force for America's working families. We're energizing our movement, we're mobilizing on an unprecedented scale," Chavez-Thompson told a crowd at a Labor Day observance in New Jersey in honor of Peter J. McGuire, who helped to create the national holiday.

Sweeney was back in Detroit two days after his arrest, on Labor Day, telling marchers that if they vote like workers, "we will have a workers' victory this November. And then we'll keep on coming back again and again until this nation respects the work we do and rewards us for the contribution we make."

Trumka delivered the same message in Chicago during the local AFL-CIO's 100th Labor Day celebration, urging the crowd to support candidates that "champion the things you and your family need."

Chavez-Thompson, in Los Angeles, told workers that the "cruel paradox" of the American economy — high profits and low wages — shows why we need unions.

Sweeney also joined President Clinton for rallies in Milwaukee and Green Bay, Wis., two of the hundreds of gatherings by trade unionists across the country to mark the holiday.

In New York City, more than 100,000 workers turned out on the Saturday after the holiday for the traditional Labor Day Parade, one of the largest in years.



Daymon J. Hartley/Sunday Journal

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney is flanked by Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and CWA Vice President Bill Boarman, at rear, as they block the entrance to the Detroit News.

Frontier strikers: Five years and holding fast

Through five years of rain, sunshine, mortgage payments and nearby casino openings, one thing has remained constant for Frontier Hotel workers — their picket line.

The 550 members of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 226 who were forced to strike the Las Vegas hotel on Sept. 21, 1991, have been buoyed by favorable court decisions and unshakable labor and community solidarity. But they remain on strike.

"Not one soul has gone back to the Frontier," said Jim Arnold, secretary-treasurer of the local. "They took our pension away, cut wages and wanted to eliminate the grievance procedure," he said.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka carried a message of admiration and support for the strikers at a rally and banquet Sept. 21-22.

"A five-year strike in which not one person has crossed the picket line deserves accolades and support," Trumka told the summer meeting of the Executive Council. He noted that Joe Daugherty, a HERE organizer, has not taken a day off in five years because he has been helping the strikers.

Frontier has faced sanctions from the National Labor Relations Board, which has declared the dispute an unfair labor practice strike, and a federal court, which has ordered the hotel to pay more than $1.5 million to the pension fund for the striking workers.

The court also ordered the hotel to rescind disciplinary findings on any employee resulting from some 64 unilaterally imposed work rules and to reinstate with back pay anyone discharged or suspended because of the rules.

"We're in this for the long haul," said Arnold.

— Muriel H. Cooper

COURTS

Cities can back unions

A federal appeals court ruling affirms the right of city and state governments to support unions in private-sector labor disputes.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit Sept. 13 reversed a lower court ruling that the city of Oakland, Calif., could not endorse a boycott of Alameda Newspapers Inc., owner of the Oakland Tribune.

The case, ANI vs. City of Oakland, began in 1993 when ANI bought the newspaper, cut 400 of 600 jobs and moved production out of the city. The Northern California Newspaper Guild and the seven unions in the Conference of Newspaper Unions launched a boycott of ANI, which the City Council endorsed, canceling all city subscriptions and official advertising.

ANI sued the city for $5 million and sought an injunction against the cancellations. A federal judge ruled in favor of ANI, saying the city illegally had tried to regulate ANI and had attempted to interfere with the "free play of economic forces."

The appeals court disagreed, saying the city merely was expressing its opinion. Cities and states have the right to "make pronouncements about labor disputes of concern to their communities," the court said.

Albertson's workers sue

Seven current and former employees of Albertson's grocery chain filed a class-action lawsuit seeking back pay for work they performed off the clock.

The suit, filed with the help of the Food and Commercial Workers, claims Albertson's threatens to fire employees who complain about working off the clock and fails to permit rest breaks on company time.

UFCW represents 31,000 of the chain's 85,000 employees.

More than 1,500 workers have given declarations that they worked off the clock for Albertson's. The company claims it has a policy against off-the-clock work, but workers maintain they are penalized if they don't finish their assigned tasks within their scheduled hours of work, forcing them to work off the clock.

Albertson's, in a preemptive strike, filed a federal lawsuit in Boise, Idaho, seeking to bar union-represented employees from initiating suits until they have exhausted the grievance arbitration procedure in their own union. The union responded with an unfair labor practice complaint, saying the lawsuit is an attempt to interfere with protected employee rights.

Several years ago, a similar UFCW investigation of nonunion Food Lion, an Albertson's competitor, raised 300 claims and led to a U.S. Labor Department suit that was settled for $16.2 million.

Airline ordered to bargain

A federal district judge has ordered America West Airlines to immediately begin contract negotiations with its mechanics.

In a companion decision, the judge dismissed claims by the Teamsters and four former workers who filed a class action suit seeking damages over America West's decision to fire several hundred workers.

However, Judge Roger Strand of the U.S. District Court for Arizona has allowed the union to proceed with its claim, charging that the airline's decision to contract out work had a negative effect on the union's organizing drive.

In April, the workers voted 587-135 for IBT representation. However, the company challenged the win, charging that the nearly 400 workers fired last December by the airline should not have been allowed to vote. The judge dismissed the challenge.



Photo by Neal Sacharow

Striking tortilla truck drivers and their supporters rally in front of the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles.

L.A. unions help tortilla drivers roll

By Sharolyn A. Rosier and James B. Parks

After working 10 to 12 hours a day, six days a week with no overtime pay, more than 100 truck drivers in Los Angeles took on their employer, tortilla maker Mission Guerrero, and won.

After seven weeks on strike, the truckers ratified a new five-year contract that gives them what they wanted: job security, better wages, cheaper health care and most of all, their dignity.

The contract, ratified Sept. 18 by an 85-2 vote, provides for guaranteed job security, an increased base pay rate and a higher commission rate. At the same time, the company agreed to explore finding a new health care provider that would reduce workers' co-payments.

The agreement will boost worker pay by $95 a week over the term of the contract. The commission rate will be raised 1 percent, from 5 percent to 6 percent. The company also agreed to give up its right to unilaterally contract out the drivers' jobs to independent contractors.

The key to the victory was community support, said Peter Olney, director of the Los Angeles Manufacturing Action Project (LAMAP), a multiunion industrial organizing program. "We made it a communitywide issue. Mission Guerrero's tortillas became taboo tortillas, not to be touched until the strike was settled."

After about five-and-a-half weeks, the company blinked at the boycott activity and negative publicity it was receiving, and started talking, Olney said.

"The company just wants the money to keep rolling in, but immigrant workers are very militant," Olney said. "This is going to force unions to look again at the whole question of how to organize, at what having a union really means."

With the help of local trade unionists, LAMAP and community activists, the strikers held demonstrations at El Pollo Loco, one of the company's major customers, and at the Mexican consulate. Several El Pollo Loco restaurants agreed to stop buying Mission Guerrero's products.

On Labor Day, the workers received a big boost from the Los Angeles Central Labor Council. During the CLC's Labor Day event, Executive Secretary-Treasurer Miguel Contreras signed a pledge to boycott the company, along with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros, U.S. Reps. Esteban Torres and Maxine Waters, Lt. Gov. Gray Davis and several city council members.

> *"We made it a community-wide issue. Mission Guerrero's tortillas became taboo tortillas, not to be touched until the strike was settled."*
>
> **— LAMAP's Peter Olney**

Three years ago, the workers, members of Teamsters Local 63, organized and achieved their main goal — health insurance for their families. During negotiations earlier this year, Mission Guerrero proposed changes that would have made their economic situation much worse.

The company proposed a pay raise of $1.03 per day the first year, with smaller raises in the second and third years. At the same time it wanted workers to increase their co-payments for health care benefits, more than canceling the proposed wage increases, said Hector Fernandez, Local 63 business agent.

The workers also were angered by the long hours they worked and the system the company uses to avoid paying overtime. While paying its drivers only $250 a week, the company, in turn, sells them their trucks for $90 to $115 a week. To get them to hustle, the company paid a commission according to the value of the tortillas each customer buys, but only after the first $2,000 in weekly sales.

For a fast driver, it usually took two to four days to reach the threshold, according to the union. The drivers routinely put in 10-to-12 hour days, six days a week, for a total of 60 to 80 hours.

In addition, the company pays $190 a week for fuel and the use of the truck, but gas alone can cost $160 to $180.

Mission Guerrero is the main tortilla supplier for the U.S. Army as well as for such fast food chains as El Pollo Loco, Taco Bell, Del Taco, Carls Jr. and Green Burrito.

UNION NEWS

Communities back USWA tire campaign

By James B. Parks

The growing roar of support for the Steelworkers' campaign against Bridgestone/Firestone added the voices of New Orleans' largest tire dealer, the Atlanta City Council and a delegation of Japanese trade unionists.

A New Orleans-style funeral, complete with Dixieland band, escorted Bridgestone and Firestone signs from four New Orleans tire stores to their "final resting place" Sept. 12 as the stores' owner, Cal Lucas, ended his family's three-decade relationship with the company. Lucas is the largest independent tire dealer in New Orleans, doing about $1 million in business annually with Bridgestone/Firestone. Now he will sell Kelly Springfield tires, which are union-made.

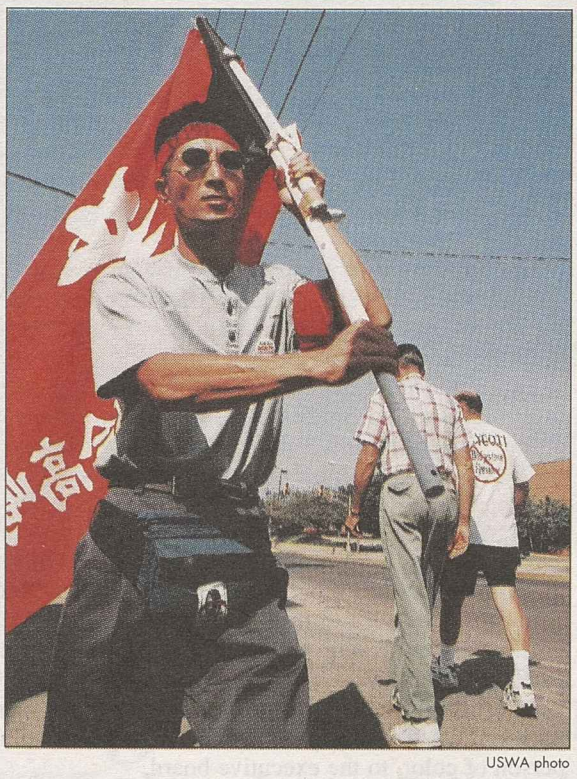
"Here's an international company with worldwide facilities that wants the workers to come to its terms," Lucas said. "They're shipping products from Third World countries while American workers are out of work. Bridgestone/Firestone has said it wants to lower wages and other costs to be competitive — it wants its workers to work for Third World wages. I don't like it!"

A crew of striking USWA members from Bayou Steel took the flags down from Lucas's four stores and replaced them with Kelly Springfield signs.

The USWA and Bridgestone/Firestone have been unable to reach agreement on a contract since July 1994, when 4,000 workers walked off the job. The workers, formerly members of the Rubber Workers, suspended the strike after 10 months. During the strike, Bridgestone/Firestone hired 2,300 replacement workers. At issue is the rehiring of 700 strikers.

The union is conducting an international "black flag" campaign against the Japanese-owned tiremaker. The black flag is the traditional racing symbol for disqualifying a car for outrageous rules violations. The USWA's "black flag" campaign is asking consumers not to buy Bridgestone/Firestone products or service, until all workers are returned to work with back wages and a fair contract is negotiated.

In Atlanta, the city council joined nearly 50 other state and local governments and businesses supporting the USWA campaign. The council adopted a resolution stating the city's refusal to "purchase Bridgestone/Firestone products until all union members are returned to work under a contract that provides dignity, equity and security."



USWA photo

Visiting Japanese workers protested with Steelworkers at a Firestone Mastercare Service Center in Des Moines, Iowa.

The resolution notes that the National Labor Relations Board is seeking "tens of millions in back pay for victims of the company's unfair labor practices" and charges that the company "has no intention of negotiating an honorable contract with the union."

A delegation of 18 Japanese trade unionists from KOKURO, the Japan railway union, and other independent unions spent six days in the United States visiting and giving support to striking Bridgestone/Firestone workers. The Japanese unionists staged peaceful protests in Firestone Service Centers in Chicago and Des Moines, Iowa, visited strikers in Decatur, Ill., and marched on Bridgestone/Firestone's U.S. headquarters in Nashville, Tenn., with strikers from the USWA's Camp Justice. They also marched with striking Detroit newspaper employees.

"We can't forgive the Japanese companies when they come to the United States and treat their workers badly," said Yoshiaki Jingu, one of the delegation's leaders.

Northwest workers seek just rewards

By David Kameras

It's payback time for workers at Northwest Airlines. Three years ago, workers helped keep the then-ailing carrier out of the bankruptcy courts by trading concessions for job security provisions and payback guarantees. Now that talks have opened for a new contract, unionists want what's rightfully theirs.

"Flight attendants sacrificed for years to make Northwest Airlines a success story," said Bruce Retrum, president of Teamsters Local 2000, which represents the flight attendants. "Now it's the flight attendants' turn to get their reward — pay they can live on, job security and pension improvements."

Northwest led its competitors last year in profits per employee, and top managers reaped the benefits in the form of millions of dollars in bonuses and exercised stock options.

"It's been a long and grueling three years," said Eunice DePinto, a 17-year flight attendant based in Seattle. "We've made a lot of money for a lot of people, and we're ready to be rewarded for our efforts."

The amount of the "snap-ups" — the pay increase over the restoration of 1993 pay levels — may be a point of contention between management and the Teamsters, as it already has been with the Air Line Pilots. The Machinists also are due snap-ups, as all three unions head into negotiations over the next several months.

In response to a survey, more than 6,000 flight attendants indicated that their top bargaining priorities are improvements in compensation, retirement and scheduling flexibility.

"I'm not going to retire next year, but I'd like to see a good retirement for all of us," added M.K. Sagastume, a flight attendant based in Detroit. "When the flight attendants at the top can retire, it opens up opportunities for everyone down the line and gives us a chance to bring more people in at the bottom."

With fours years at Northwest, Sagastume still lacks the seniority to be assured of a definite advance schedule.

Unity will be the watchword as the unionists brave the negotiating season.

"The concessions we've been through have shown us that we have to look out for each other and stick together and look at ourselves, not as a bunch of individual people, but as a union," said Carrie Trettel, an 11-year veteran from Boston.

In other industry developments:

- The Transportation Department turned down a request by the Flight Attendants to investigate the department's conduct in tentatively finding ValuJet fit to resume operations following the May 11 crash in Miami.

Charging that DoT has lowered the safety standard it expects airline executives to meet, AFA President Pat Friend said undue influence by the carrier and members of Congress pressured the department to turn "a blind eye toward one of the most frightening safety records in the airline industry."

- Voting has begun for Teamsters representation of mechanics at ValuJet, which was grounded amid reports that maintenance work had been contracted out to poorly paid subcontractors.
- Flight attendants at Continental Airlines, represented by the IAM, ratified a three-and-a-half-year contract that features significant pay raises, job protections and improved vacation and sick leave.

BARGAINING

UNITE sews up cotton deal

UNITE members were voting on a tentative agreement reached Sept. 9 with the multiemployer association representing cotton garment companies.

The agreement, which covers 30,000 employees in the cotton garment industry nationwide, was recommended by the negotiation committee. The ratification vote, which began immediately, was expected to be completed Sept. 23. The previous agreement expired Aug. 31.

Some of the nation's largest manufacturers in the cotton garment industry are members of the multiemployer group, including Arrow Shirt, Biltwell, Pendleton Woolen Mills, Manhattan Shirt and The Apparel Group.

SEIU ends hospital strike

Members of Service Employees Local 144 in New York City ended a two-month strike Aug. 27 after ratifying a new three-year agreement with 13 hospitals and nursing homes.

Some 6,700 technical, service and maintenance employees walked out June 24 after talks broke down over cost-cutting proposals by the League of Voluntary Hospitals, which represented management. The previous contract expired Dec. 1, 1995.

The new contract calls for lump-sum payments of $750 in 1996 and 1997 and $1,000 in 1998. Medical care benefits and education benefits also were improved.

BCT, Nabisco agree

The Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers overwhelmingly approved a new five-year contract with Nabisco Biscuit Co. that raises wages and benefits by $4.61 an hour over it's term.

The contract is a "win-win" for both sides, BCT Secretary-Treasurer and lead negotiator Gene McDonald said. The successful outcome is the result of a mutually productive relationship developed by the company and union over time, he said. In February, representatives from each of the 10 Nabisco plants and the international met with company officials to draft a "vision statement" for the future and a "road map" to get there.

The new contract calls for an hourly wage increase of 40 cents the first year, followed by raises of 50 cents, 60 cents, 50 cents and 60 cents. The company also agreed to increase pension fund contributions each year and to improve health care benefits.

TCU ratifies contract

Members of the Transportation Communications Union overwhelmingly ratified agreements with the nation's major freight railroads that will yield 16.9 percent wage increases by the end of the century.

The contracts cover 20,000 clerks and 12,000 carmen, who voted in favor by margins of 86 percent and 76 percent, respectively. The pacts also provide for post-contract cost-of-living adjustments every six months, no rule concessions and, in 1999, improved health care and dental benefits and a new vision plan.

Albertson pact approved

Members of Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 ratified a new three-year contract with Albertson's supermarkets that gives hourly 35-cent raises each year to entry-level employees.

Also, workers in the top categories will receive a 30-cent-an-hour raise each year. The contract improves pension benefits and maintains the current bonus program. About 2,500 retail workers and meatcutters in 29 stores in Denver, Colorado Springs, Boulder and Longmont, Colo., are covered by the deal. The previous contract expired May 11.

Many of the provisions mirror those in contracts with the state's largest grocers, King Soopers and Safeway. But a key change, allowing management more flexibility in scheduling, did not appear in the Albertson's contract.

Negotiations with Albertson's were put on hold this summer after Local 7 began a 44-day strike against King Soopers and were locked out by its bargaining partner, Safeway. Despite the delay, negotiators met 22 times trying to complete a new agreement.

UNION NEWS

Pact ends vet home strike

Striking AFSCME members at the Anna, Ill., veterans' home ratified their first contract Sept. 12, clearing their return to work after walking the bricks for some five weeks.

The three-year pact with ServiceMaster Diversified Health Services calls for increases totaling nearly $4 over term — from $4.60 to $4.71 an hour to $8.25 to $8.50 an hour — and includes employer-provided health insurance, additional paid leave, holiday pay, a 401(k) program, grievance procedures and regular labor-management meetings.

"This agreement is a victory for the workers, for the veterans they serve and for all of Southern Illinois," said Henry Bayer, executive director of AFSCME Council 31. "These workers have demonstrated the power that even a small group of employees can wield when they are committed, when they have the courage of their convictions and when they are united by the strength of union representation."

As part of the settlement, Diversified agreed to return all of the striking workers to their jobs.

Peerless show crashed

UNITE members continued to put pressure on Montreal's Peerless Clothing Co. as they staged a major protest outside the biannual MAGIC (Men's Apparel Guild in California) show in Las Vegas.

About 500 members distributed leaflets and chanted "Shame on Peerless," as another 50 went inside the convention site to do the same.

Peerless is a leading men's suit manufacturer and exports 95 percent of its line to the United States.

UNITE began its national protest campaign almost a year ago, citing sexual and racial harassment and illegal firings of members of the mostly immigrant work force. Workers have filed 34 complaints with the Quebec government charging Peerless with ethnic discrimination and other civil rights violations.

IBT backs Avis sale

After reaching an agreement this summer with Avis over employee job security, the Teamsters endorsed the $800 million sale of the company to HFS Inc., a national franchiser of hotels and residential real estate brokerage offices.

Avis employees who are participants in the car rental company's employee stock ownership plan will be voting over the next few weeks on the sale.

The IBT negotiated a series of protective measures with Avis related to the proposed sale. IBT represents more than 3,000 Avis employees.

R.I. gets a raise

Rhode Island's working poor got some relief Sept. 1 when the state's minimum wage rose from $4.45 to $4.75 an hour; it will rise again to $5.15 next Jan. 1.

The maximum allowance for gratuities in such businesses as hotels and restaurants will increase from 35 percent to 50 percent, with a minimum cash wage of $2.89 an hour. There is no training wage.

The income boost "is a step toward making sure that people who make minimum wage don't live in poverty," state AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer George Nee said.

Meanwhile, the New York City Council voted 44-5 to override a veto of a bill to require city contractors to pay prevailing wages. Mayor Rudolph W. Guiliani (R) has threatened legal action.

Sweatshops pay up

The Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division recovered $699,323 in back wages between April and June 1996 for 2,486 garment workers who illegally were denied minimum wage or overtime pay.

Meanwhile, criminal charges were filed after a series of August raids in Brooklyn, N.Y., garment shops, including one linked to the celebrity Kathy Ireland label.

New York led the nation in wage-and-hour violations with 56 violations, and California followed closely behind with 49. During the third fiscal quarter, the largest back-pay award — $113,457 — went to workers of Truong Sewing in Garland, Texas.

The Brooklyn raids resulted from a two-month investigation by the district attorney's office, fire and finance departments and state labor department. The charges involved violations of the city's fire safety code and the state minimum wage law's prohibition on piecework.

Young will lead Paperworkers

Convention concentrates on organizing, politics

Las Vegas

The Paperworkers elected new leaders and set a course for the year 2000 that emphasizes organizing and political action.

The convention, which retiring President Wayne E. Glenn called "a watershed in terms of policy and direction," was the first since the 1994 merger with the Allied Industrial Workers.

To lead the union, delegates elected Boyd D. Young as president to succeed Glenn, who had reached mandatory retirement age under the union constitution. Secretary-Treasurer James Dunn was re-elected without opposition. Glenn, who served 18 years as president, was elected president emeritus.

Young, 56, was vice president for Region VI which includes Texas and Louisiana. He received 14,338 votes, defeating Gerald Johnston, who received 8,357 votes. Besides Young and Dunn, delegates elected three new members of the executive board to replace retiring members. They rejected a move to add two rank-and-file members, one a woman and the other a person of color, to the executive board.

The 2,200 delegates voted to intensify organizing efforts by training representatives, organizers and local union leaders in organizing techniques. They also called for the union to develop a strategy for including retirees in organizing and political action efforts.

After an emotional debate, delegates rejected a proposal to reduce the number of regions from 11 to 8. Supporters claimed it would improve union efficiency.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, citing labor's recent legislative wins on the minimum wage, health care reform, defeat of the TEAM Act and so-called right-to-work laws, praised the UPIU for pioneering some of the new tactics and strategies that the federation is using.

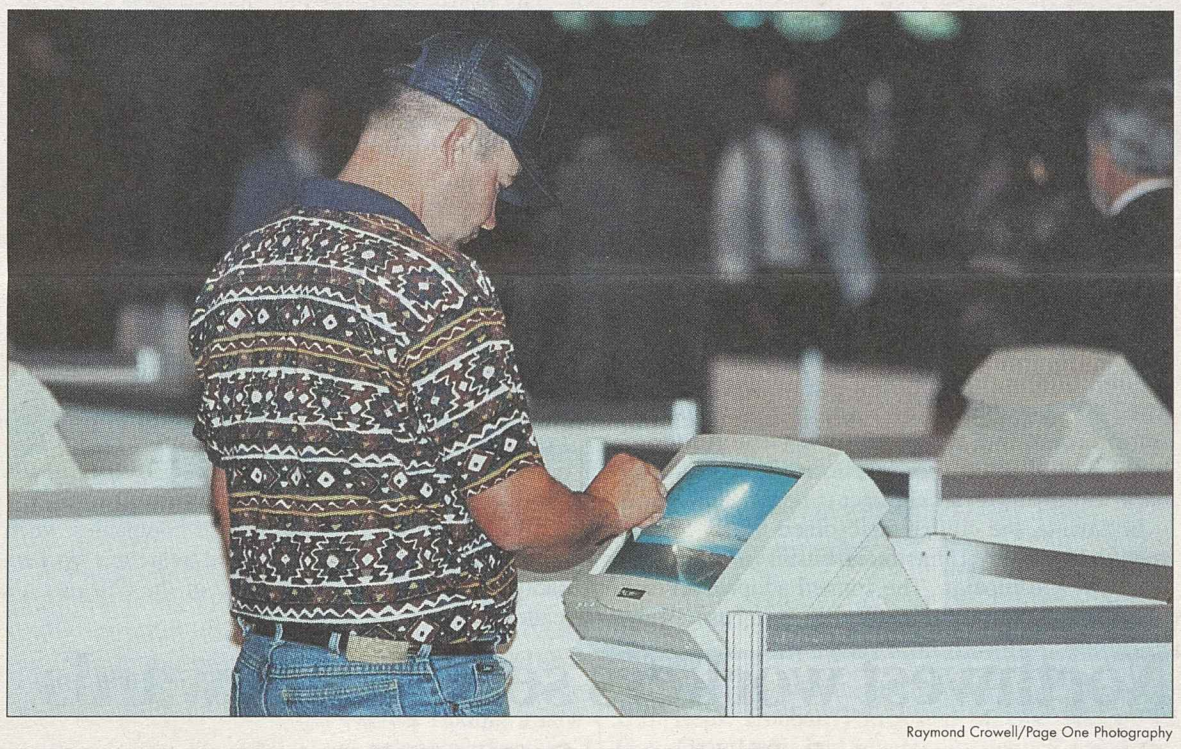
"Instead of playing by the old political rules, we're lifting the lid off the House and the Senate and letting in some sunshine. Instead of being victimized by outmoded traditions of collective bargaining, we're exposing the actions and motives of our employers," Sweeney said.

The federation has shifted its legislative focus from Washington into congressional districts "where politicians have to listen," Sweeney said. "We've taken our contract fights out of the suites and into the streets. When an employer or a politician crosses us, we take them on, aggressively and publicly. When a boss goes bad, we get mad."

Sweeney also paid tribute to UPIU's bargaining successes. "Don't let me forget the members of this union who took a stand for all of us and said 'No, hell no' to Trailmobile and Menominee Paper Co. and Finch Pruyn. Thank you for teaching us to win again."

Other speakers included Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers President Robert Wages, AFSCME President Gerald McEntee and AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal.

— James B. Parks



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

A delegate to the IBEW convention uses touch-screen electronic voting to record his pick for president.

IBEW prepares for hi-tech future

Philadelphia

Electrical Workers President John J. Barry and Secretary Jack F. Moore were overwhelmingly re-elected in a convention that featured electronic voting, a laser show and other hi-tech touches that kept delegates focused on the union's future.

The more than 2,400 delegates used touch-screen electronic voting to select Moore and Barry by a nearly 5-1 margin over challengers Mike Lucas and Forrest Darby. Re-elected without opposition were Treasurer Thomas Van Arsdale and Executive Council Chairman Clyde Bowden.

"We must go beyond the parochial concerns of one branch or another and face squarely the larger issues that bind us together and will affect our common fate," Barry said in his keynote address. "We in the IBEW want a world where a man can go to a safe workplace, earn a fair wage and use his skills to do a good day's work.

"We want a world where a woman can develop her talents to the fullest and have a wealth of opportunity before her," he said, "where workers can retire with dignity, with the security of knowing that their health care is affordable and available . . . and where workers can organize and bargain collectively to achieve all these things in fairness and in justice."

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney vowed the federation's grass-roots legislative and political campaigns would help bring a progressive majority back into control in the House, pick up a couple of Senate seats and re-elect President Clinton and Vice President Gore.

Delegates defeated a proposal to allow Canadian locals to hold a separate convention, reaffirmed their opposition to an age limit of 65 for international officers (the question had been defeated in a spring referendum), raised the salaries of some international officers and changed their pensions.

Vigorous debate was held over resolutions to create an Electric Utility Industry Advancement Fund by increasing per capita of utility locals, to assess each member $1 per month to fight utility deregulation and to create a Utility Industry Advancement Fund by using current per capita funds. Ultimately, delegates decided to return the matters to the committee for further work.

Another major issue that divided the delegates was a proposed constitutional change to require a secret ballot election for the top four officers. After two days of debate on three such resolutions, the convention approved a substitute amendment that requires secret ballots in the future.

Also addressing the convention were Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President William George, Philadelphia Mayor Edward Rendell and labor's priest, Msgr. George Higgins of Catholic University.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

GCIU looks to organizing as 'lifeblood'

Delegates urged to embrace technology

Anaheim, Calif.

Delegates to the Graphic Communications Union convention raised per capita to boost organizing and service to members, and explored ways to make technological innovation work for workers, not against them.

Calling technology a two-edged sword, GCIU President James J. Norton told the nearly 500 delegates that "we must embrace it so our employers can stay competitive. But technological change causes workers to be displaced."

"Staying abreast in the industry has to continue indefinitely, because technology will not leave us in 1996 and is likely to impact on us in the next four years," he said.

Delegates approved increases in the per capita tax of 75 cents in 1997 and again in 1999, with organizing on their minds.

"Without organizing, we jeopardize our existing wages and working conditions," Norton said. "With a successful organizing program, we assure a continuation of financial and workplace gains along with pension improvements that are the lifeblood of a successful union."

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney lauded the union for its coordinated bargaining campaign with Quebecor, the largest single-employer effort in the union's history, and urged delegates to fully involve themselves in the fall election campaign.

"Two years ago, we lost 29 congressional districts to 'Newtie and the Blowhards' by less than 5,000 votes," Sweeney said. "In those districts, we had two to three times that many union members who didn't even vote. So your work, your commitment can and will make a difference."

"On Nov. 5, we're going to reach down and root out the ugliness that has grabbed hold of our nation," he said. "And that's a promise. That's a commitment."

The convention took up a number of resolutions regarding such diverse topics as organizing, striker replacement and political action.

Speakers included AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department President Robert A. Georgine; Canadian Labour Congress President Robert White; Ontario Federation of Labour President Gordon Wilson; and Tony Dobbins, general secretary of Britain's Graphical Paper and Media Union.



UFW photo

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney and UFW President Arturo Rodriguez cheer convention demonstration.

'Organize all farm workers'

UFW plans for growth, new fights for justice

Fresno, Calif.

Fired up after gaining more than 35,000 new members in the last four years, the Farm Workers outlined new goals for the union and pushed its effort to organize strawberry workers to center stage.

"The organizing won't stop with the strawberry workers. We will organize all farm workers," UFW President Arturo Rodriguez told the 500 delegates to the union's 13th convention in Fresno, Calif., over the Labor Day weekend.

The UFW's intensive organizing has made it the nation's fastest-growing union, and AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney held it up as a model for the rest of the labor movement.

"We must organize more workers as you in the Farm Workers union are doing," Sweeney said. "Whatever we do, we must ask, how does this help us grow and give workers more power? Because if we don't grow in big numbers, we cannot survive."

Sweeney's address was the first ever by an AFL-CIO president to the UFW convention.

Sweeney, Rodriguez and Secretary-Treasurer Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the union, led about 200 strawberry workers from the Salinas-Watsonville area in a march around the convention center floor, shouting, "Strawberry workers united will never be defeated."

"These workers are among the most exploited in all of agriculture," Rodriguez said. "We will continue until they receive the benefits of a union contract."

The march preceded the second national day of action in support of the strawberry workers in 50 cities around the nation on Sept. 16. **(See story, Page 12).**

The strawberry campaign is not as difficult as the famous grape boycott led by the union's founder, Cesar Chavez, Rodriguez said. Strawberries must be picked within days or they become overripe and rapidly lose value, giving the union more leverage, he said.

Political action in the form of a voter registration card is as important as organizing and gaining a union card, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros told the delegates. "If you don't have a vote, you don't have a voice. With the vote, we can take our children to the future. I want to see a Latino governor of California," he said.

One of the highlights of the convention was a tribute to Chavez, who died four years ago. Delegates constantly shouted "Si Se Puede" (Yes We Can), Chavez's rallying cry. An emotional high point came when six-year-old Angel Noriega of Fresno recited Chavez's famous definition of machismo. "Machismo is not to hit your wife and not to have a beer with your friends. Machismo is not to bow down to your boss," Noriega said.

Other speakers included Jack Henning, former executive secretary-treasurer of the California AFL-CIO; Miguel Contreras, executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles AFL-CIO; Maria Elena Durazo, president of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 11; and Elisco Medina, a vice president of the Service Employees.

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

Machinists' strategy pays off in McDonnell Douglas pact

Continued from Page 1

after nearly 30 hours of continuous negotiations in the Capitol Hill offices of House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.), who represents many of the McDonnell Douglas workers.

During the strike, the IAM used a broad range of strategies to present its case. In this strike, as in the Boeing strike earlier this year, a key was the union's ability to link the plight of the St. Louis workers to international issues, said Barbara Shailor, who helped develop that strategy before being named AFL-CIO international affairs director in August.

Two years before bargaining began at Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, the union researched how much production was being shipped out to nonunion U.S. plants and to low-wage Asian countries, particularly China. When talks began, the workers had a clear sense of what work was in China, Shailor said.

"We got under the argument of many American companies that you have to move work outside the country to access the market to sell your products," Shailor said. "It's called the half-loaf theory — half a loaf is better than no loaf. We came back with, 'It's a loaf being baked outside the U.S. for the upper crust at home.' "

It wasn't hard to educate the members about the outsourcing, she said. The worker on the shop floor knows work is being sent out when he sees a crate marked "Made in China." But the union had to show that the trend would likely continue unless there were skids in the contract to prevent it, she added.

The union's research also was used to generate press stories that alerted the public to the results of the outsourcing. Prior to the opening of talks The Wall Street Journal exposed that the aerospace company's strategy of exporting technology to China had backfired. After one deal, the company received no new business and had given away a generation of technology to China needlessly.

The union also received significant help from the AFL-CIO and other unions. AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka led a mass "March for American Jobs" by 10,000 people on McDonnell Douglas headquarters in St. Louis Aug. 11, along with Kourpias, Steelworkers President George Becker and UAW Secretary-Treasurer Roy Wyse.

"America is sick of corporate greed," Trumka told the crowd. "America is sick of rich corporations sending our best jobs and technologies overseas, and taking huge executive bonuses while laying off loyal American workers."

Wyse told the strikers, "Labor is not going to fail here. This will send a message to other companies all across the nation and teach them something about corporate responsibility. Mac won't win."

On the political front, the IAM asked President Clinton to withhold any federal payments to McDonnell Douglas related to the strike.

In an Aug. 14 letter, Kourpias also asked Clinton to request an audit of the quality, cost and safety of all work performed for the government by the temporary replacement workers from across the country.

But the biggest political push came from Gephardt and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, said union spokesman Bob Kalaski.

When bargaining stalled, Gephardt summoned the two sides to Washington and stressed the importance of a settlement. He then offered his office for the talks, and it was there that the final bargain was struck. In appreciation, the union and the company jointly bought an ad in the Sunday edition of the St. Louis Post Dispatch Sept. 15 thanking Gephardt and FMCS for their help in the strike.

The new contract parallels the Boeing contract on job security. It requires the company to give 60 days' notice of subcontracting plans that would affect 50 or more union jobs, and to consult with the union on ways to retain jobs and skills.

Displaced workers will be retrained and re-employed at available work in the company and will receive continued benefits.

Workers will receive two wage increases totaling 4.5 percent, plus three bonuses totaling 9 percent. Under the new "30-and-out" retirement program, workers will be eligible to retire as early as age 50. Defined retiree benefits will be set at $41 per month per year of service.

Prosperity eludes hard-working U.S. families

By David Kameras

Despite job growth during the 1990s, the typical American family still faces considerable economic pain and uncertainty, according to several new studies.

In "Running in Place: Trends in U.S. Living Standards," the bipartisan Competitive Policy Council concludes that workers are toiling longer hours for less pay, and even the evolution of two-earner households hasn't helped working families keep up.

The Economic Policy Institute's annual "The State of Working America" also found a continuing deterioration of hourly wages for all but the top 20 percent of male earners and most female earners between 1989 and 1995. The combination of falling wages and increased job loss, largely a blue-collar phenomenon in the 1980s, has now moved up the income scale at the same time that fringe benefits have eroded, EPI reported.

"For the vast American middle class and for low-income families, neither the 1979-89 nor the 1989-95 business cycles have brought increased prosperity," the report said. "American families are beset by a long-term erosion in wages, deteriorating job quality and greater economic insecurity."

"There seems to be no overall gain or efficiency payoff associated with all the evident pain," economists Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein and John Schmitt wrote. "There is no evidence that the economic squeeze on families is part of some sacrifice that will improve economic conditions in a way that will benefit families in the future."

The researchers pointed to the weakening of union protections and the right to organize and bargain collectively, as well as such diverse factors as deregulation, globalization, tax inequity and weakened safety, health and environmental rules, as contributing to structural changes in the economy that place workers at a disadvantage.

Mishel and Bernstein also conducted one of two studies on which the Competitiveness Policy Council based its report. In "Trouble in Paradise: Eroding Wages and Growing Income Inequality," they found that median family income after inflation in 1993 ($36,959) was only marginally higher than it was in 1973 ($36,893) even though many more families rely on two wage-earners than 20 years ago.

With more families depending on two wage-earners, there has been a "fundamental change in the way we earn our income," said Howard Rosen, the council's executive director. This has put greater pressure on working families, he noted.

The other study by the council, conducted by Frank Levy of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, found that most family incomes are rising only because the women in the households are working more hours.

The EPI's Labor Day report included several key findings that buttressed its analysis.

- From 1989 to 1995, hourly wages plummeted 6.3 percent for the typical male worker. The drop was 1.7 percent for the typical female worker, partially reversing gains made during the 1980s.
- Median family income was down 5.2 percent, with the bottom 95 percent showing a loss. Besides continuing wage deterioration, the decline was attributable to the decreasing ability of contributions by working wives to offset the lower earnings of their husbands.
- Since middle-class workers pay the same proportion of their income in taxes as they did in the late 1970s, "the rise in inequality and fall in living standards reflect what employers aren't putting into paychecks, not what government is taking out in taxes."
- Hourly compensation, which includes fringe benefits, has risen only 0.1 percent faster than hourly wages alone since 1979, while workers receiving employer-provided health benefits fell in 1979-1993 from 79 percent to 64 percent, and pension coverage fell from 48 percent to 45 percent.
- The ratio of CEO pay to that of the average worker rose from 60:1 in 1978 to 173:1 in 1995, a year in which business after-tax profit rates reached a 30-year high, fueled by stagnant or falling wages.
- The benefits of the booming stock market eluded most workers, with only 28 percent of families owning more than $2,000 in stock, including shares owned through pension plans.

Despite lower wages and standard of living for most Americans, "there is no evidence of our economy becoming more competitive or having improved in the fundamentals of capital accumulation or economic efficiency and productivity," the authors said.

"Government policy-makers and elected leaders must be judged on their ability to change the economic course of the country, to leave the low-wage for the high-wage path," they said.

Real earnings rise with prices stable

Real weekly earnings rose a substantial 0.7 percent in August, as workers put in more hours for higher pay.

Contributing to the improvement was stability in consumer prices, which increased only 0.1 percent in August. The annualized rate of 1.8 percent for the past three months indicates a significant slowing down of what was already a slim inflationary trend.

The price data "confirm the opinions of commentators who say that inflation is not a problem for policy-makers," said AFL-CIO economist Bill Cunningham.

Nonetheless, the Federal Reserve Board has sought to use the recent federal minimum-wage boost as a pretext for raising interest rates to combat its superficial impact on inflation. The idea is that the higher cost of money will slow down business expansion and the jobs it creates, thereby holding down wages. The Fed will consider the possibility of raising interest rates Sept. 24.

Ironically, current economic performance is calling into question the whole premise that reducing joblessness necessarily results in higher prices.

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich noted that the "natural" rate of unemployment is being re-defined downward as sustained employment levels coincide with stable prices.

"It seems to me that in making decisions about how vigorously we wage war on inflation, we should fully consider those who are most likely to be the war's first casualties," he said.

Jobless rate at seven-year low

Layoffs are continuing as economy expands

The unemployment rate fell from 5.4 percent to 5.1 percent in August, the lowest level in seven years. Still, millions of workers have yet to benefit from the economic recovery, now in its 65th month.

Including underutilized and discouraged workers, the rate was 9.3 percent, or 12.7 million workers.

Employment rose by 250,000, with 10 percent of that in manufacturing, led by motor vehicle and equipment fabrication.

In addition to August's improved jobless figures, the rate at which workers are being laid off over the past three years is less than that for the previous three years. But 3.8 million long-term employees still got pink slips between 1993 and 1995. Long-term workers are defined as those over the age of 20 who have held a job for at least three years.

"The data from the earlier period reflected the impact of the 1990-91 recession and the slow labor market recovery that followed," said the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which compiled the figures. "In contrast, the February 1996 survey covered a period of employment expansion and declining unemployment."

Yet the layoff process continues:

- Union Pacific Railroad, which is merging with Southern Pacific Railroad, will cut 1,200 jobs in Denver over the next two years.
- Campbell Soup Co., which prefers buying out a German soupmaker to retaining its own employees, is planning to cut 650 jobs.
- Pendleton Woolen Mills is closing its UNITE-represented Sellwood plant at the cost of 119 jobs, a move that even management attributes to the North American Free Trade Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.
- On the upside, Boeing Co. is hiring 5,000 more workers than previously anticipated. And UNITE has traded wage concessions to save two-thirds of 650 apparel jobs slated for elimination at M. Wile Co. in Buffalo, N.Y.

"While the decline in job dislocation is a positive trend, the report also confirms that some American workers who lose their jobs remain unemployed and, for those who do find new jobs, many experience a drop in earnings," said Joseph E. Stiglitz, chairman of President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers.

While 73 percent of the laid-off full-time workers were re-employed by February 1996, half were unable to match or exceed their previous earnings, and a third suffered losses of 20 percent or more. Those in the 25-to-54 age group had the highest re-employment rate, 78 percent.

Manufacturing continued to take the brunt of the displacement (29 percent). While men were more likely to be laid off, they were also more likely to be re-employed.

"This report underscores the importance of increasing access to education and worker training and protecting dislocated workers' health and pension benefits to help ease job transition and reduce the cost of job loss to American workers," Stiglitz said.

That process may be made more difficult by the huge influx of welfare recipients into the labor market as a result of the GOP welfare reform package signed by President Clinton. Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich has indicated that the administration will seek a targeted tax credit to encourage employers to hire those struggling to get off the dole.

Specific data for July showed Washington, D.C., with the nation's highest unemployment rate (9 percent), followed by Alaska (7.6 percent), California and New Mexico (both 7.1 percent). North Dakota had the lowest (2.8 percent), followed by Nebraska (2.9 percent), South Dakota (3 percent) and Utah (3.1 percent).

— David Kameras

Yawning trade gap swallows workers

America's international trade imbalance worsened considerably in the second quarter, with the merchandise deficit jumping from $12.4 billion to $19.6 billion.

Imports of goods and services soared at a 14 percent annual rate, up from a rapid 12 percent gain in the first quarter. Excluding oil, imported merchandise met a record 26.5 percent of demand for goods in the second quarter.

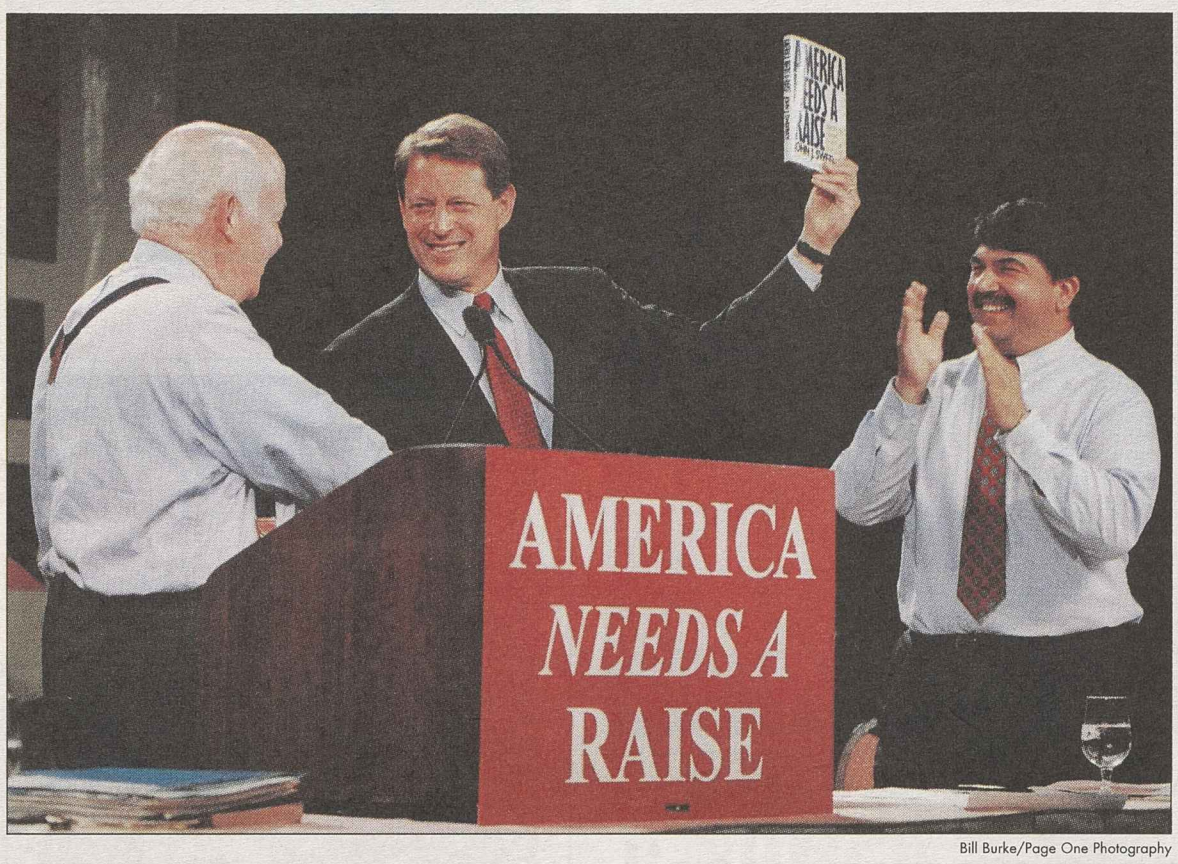
"The figures demonstrate once again that the continued growing deficit in trade constitutes the greatest area of weakness in the economy," said Mark Anderson, director of the AFL-CIO Task Force on Trade. "That deficit continues to represent a drag on wages."

From January to July, the goods deficit with Japan was $26.6 billion, 29 percent less than during the same period last year. However, the trade imbalance with China was $19.5 billion.

The $23 billion cumulative goods trade deficit with the other signatories to the North American Free Trade Agreement was up 26 percent from the first seven months of 1995, with a deficit of $13.3 billion scored with Canada, and with Mexico, $9.7 billion.

It would be hard to blame the deficit on excessive wages. Once the world leader in earning power, the American factory worker has slipped behind his counterparts in Japan and 10 European countries in terms of hourly compensation costs.

"The international comparisons of compensation costs show that other developed countries have industrial systems that value workers," said AFL-CIO economist Greg Woodhead. "If the basis for international competition is low wages and low standards of worker protection, the United States is leading in the race to the bottom."



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Vice President Gore waves his autographed copy of AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney's new book, "America Needs A Raise," after addressing labor delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago Aug. 25. The book is available at your local bookstore, or may be ordered in bulk from the AFL-CIO by calling 202/637-5041.

NEWSMAKERS

Delegates to the South Carolina AFL-CIO convention elected **Donna DeWitt,** a member of the Communications Workers, as president to fill the unexpired term of **G.O. Smoak,** who retired. The convention quickly adjourned on the first day so that delegates could return to their homes as recent hurricanes bore down on the state.

Suzanne Granville has been appointed assistant director for grass-roots activity in the Legislative Department at the AFL-CIO. Granville, 35, worked in a similar position with the Letter Carriers.

Karla Garland has been named the director of public affairs for the AFL-CIO's Housing Investment Trust. Garland previously served as a media spokesperson for the AFL-CIO and coordinator for media and marketing in its broadcast division. Garland, the former Newspaper Guild unit chair, joined the federation in 1974.

Chris Woods is the new chief of staff for the AFL-CIO Organizing Department. Woods previously served as national recruitment director for the Organizing Institute. Before that she was an organizer for the Clothing and Textile Workers, now UNITE.

President Clinton announced his intent to nominate AFL-CIO President Emeritus **Lane Kirkland** to the board of directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace.The bipartisan board was established in 1948 by Congress to promote international peace and the resolution of international conflict without violence, through education, training, research and public information.

President Clinton named **John E. Higgins** to fill a vacancy on the five-member National Labor Relations Board. Higgins, a Republican, currently serves as the agency's acting inspector general.

John Calhoun Wells, director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) has selected **C. Richard Barnes** as deputy director for field operations. Barnes will oversee nearly 200 federal mediators in the country. Prior to joining FMCS, Barnes was a Laborers' district council manager.

Two union presidents have been elected to the Railway Labor Executives' Association. **W.D. "Dan" Pickett** of the Railroad Signalmen was elected chair and **Clarence V. Monin** of the Locomotive Engineers vice chair for the association.

Maryland **Gov. Parris Glendening** joined AFL-CIO President **John J. Sweeney** at the George Meany Labor Studies Center Sept. 13 to unveil a new program that will enable community college students enrolled in labor studies programs in Maryland to transfer their credits to four-year institutions. The Meany Center's Maryland Institute for Labor Education (MILE) program is expected to be a national model for community-based union leadership education.

AWARDS

The Letter Carriers is honoring four workers as "Heroes of the Year." **Joan Barr** will receive the National Hero of the Year award for her actions in crawling under an Amtrak train to try and save victims trapped inside a burning commuter train in suburban Washington, D.C. **Donald Coldwell** was selected as the National Humanitarian for his family's commitment to provide foster care.

Regional heroes include **Guy A. Young** from Manchester, N.H., who helped save an infant trapped in an overturned van; **Mark A. Hopkins** of Chicago, who saved an elderly man being assaulted and robbed at an ATM machine; and **Carlos E. Tichenor** of Topeka, Kan., who came to the assistance of a police officer overpowered by a disorderly man at a post office.

Bricklayers Local 1 in Detroit won the "Best Brick Project" award from the International Masonry Institute for its construction of the new Veterans Administration Hospital.

Farm Workers President **Arturo Rodriguez** will receive the Labor Award from the Southern California Americans for Democratic Action.

DEATHS

Jesse A. Friedman, an international labor representative and union educator, died of cancer at age 62.

Friedman, a longtime member of the Ladies' Garment Workers, now UNITE, devoted all of his professional life to organizing and supporting workers in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean. He began his career working in the St. John's Labor Center in Annapolis, Md., and joined the U.S. Labor Department in 1960. In 1962, he was appointed assistant Latin American representative in the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Department.

In 1967, Friedman joined the American Institute for Free Labor Development and served as regional director and deputy executive director before being named executive director in 1996. From 1977 until his death, Friedman was a member of the AFL-CIO delegation to the annual conferences of the International Labor Organization, where he participated on many committees responsible for drafting standards designed to protect workers' rights.

He is survived by his wife, four daughters and two brothers.

— Compiled by Muriel H. Cooper

RESOURCES

The George Meany Center for Labor Studies is well into its fall semester, offering 29 different courses ranging from organizing, communications and negotiating to labor law and workplace violence, that will continue through December. Contact the center at 301/431-6400.

CONFERENCE

The AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute conference **American Workforce in Transition** will be held Dec. 7-10, 1996, at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. Contact Carol Claggett at 800/842-HRDI (4734).

Labor, academic allies join forces for U.S. teach-ins

America's workers are joining their academic allies in a national campaign on the re-energized labor movement.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney announced the new alliance at a Washington news conference Sept. 18 along with feminist author Betty Friedan, civil rights activist and history professor Roger Wilkins, American Association of University Professors President James E. Perley and other academics.

"This new initiative, 'A Teach-In with the Labor Movement,' proves there is no gap between young Americans and those who nurture, mentor and teach them," Sweeney said. "This teach-in adds a powerful new dimension to the development of the new and stronger voice for working families we're working so hard to create."

The teach-ins are designed to promote a new spirit of engagement and activism by serving as a way to stimulate a national dialogue between academics and trade unionists. Subjects for discussion include immigration, the globalized economy, organizing among African-Americans, welfare and work, families and feminism, labor political action and culture, identity and class politics.

A national event at Columbia University Oct. 3-4 kicks off the campaign. Joining Sweeney and Friedan at Columbia the first night will be Harvard theologian Cornel West, University of Virginia philosopher Richard Rorty and, from Columbia, historian Eric Foner and law professor Patricia Williams.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson lead a distinguished group of participants that includes AFL-CIO Working Women Director Karen Nussbaum, Columbia African-American Studies Chair Manning Marable, feminist essayist and poet Katha Pollitt, AFSCME International Area Director Jose LaLuz and Yale historian David Montgomery, among others.

Regional teach-ins are scheduled throughout October at Wayne State University, Detroit; University of Cincinnati; Clinch Valley College, Wise, Va.; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Ill.; University of Texas at El Paso; University of Florida, Tallahassee; University of Wisconsin, Madison; and State University of New York-Geneseo.

— Colleen M. O'Neill

UAW writers win top ILCA awards

Two writers for UAW Solidarity have garnered top honors in the 1996 ILCA journalism contest.

David Elsila and Andrew Neather, who collaborated on "Putting Together the Affirmative Action Puzzle," received the Max Steinbock Award, which honors outstanding individual effort in exploring an issue of concern to working families that displays particular sensitivity and insight into the human spirit.

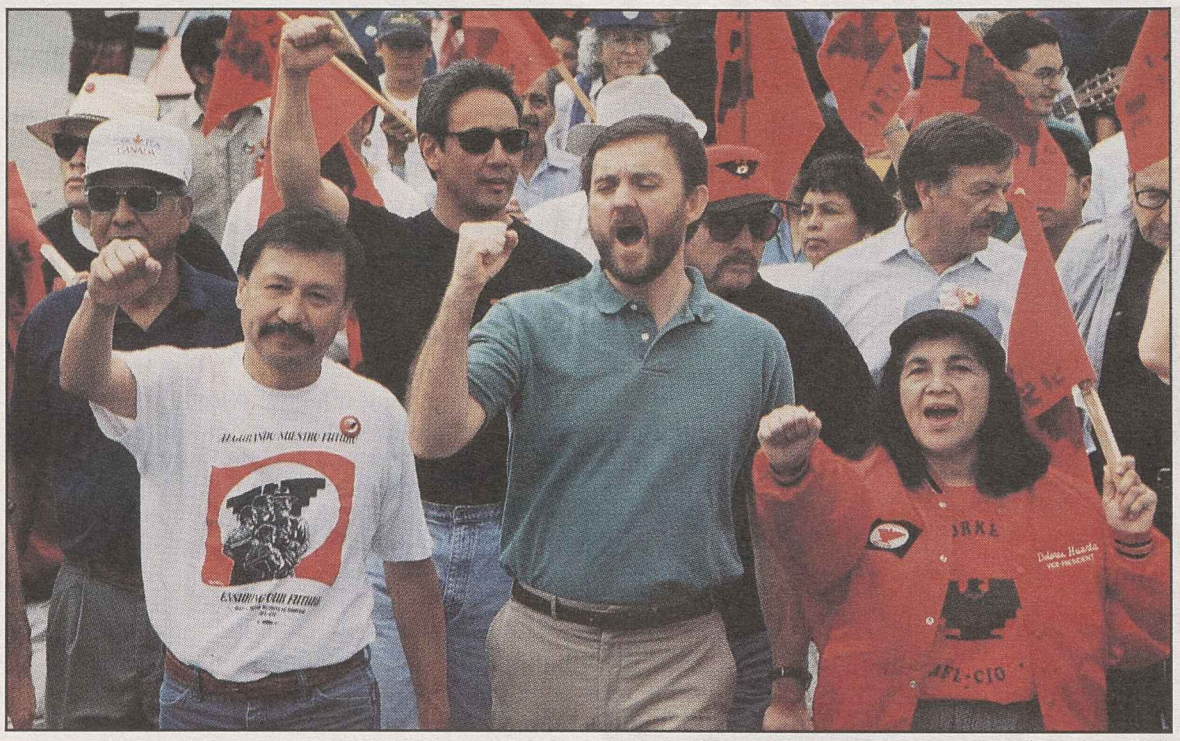
Receiving honorable mentions for the Steinbock Award were Bill Hillman of the Television and Radio Artists for the article "Blacklist," and Nancy Brigham, also writing in Solidarity, for the article "What Will Happen to the Children? — How 'Welfare Reform' Will Hurt Those Least Able to Defend Themselves."

The Saul Miller Awards recognize outstanding efforts by the labor press in presenting stories about union organizing and victories.

UFCW ACTION was given the award of excellence for international union publications, with the Service Employees' UNION winning second place and UFCW Canada Action and IUE News winning third place.

Top local union publications were UFCW Local 400's Union Leader, followed by AFT Local 5047's Update 47 and Machinists' Local Lodge 141's The Transporter.

A complete listing of ILCA winners is available on LaborNet on CompuServe or on the AFL-CIO home page at http://www.aflcio.org.



David Bacon/Impact Visuals

Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez and Secretary-Treasurer Dolores Huerta are joined by Art Pulaski, executive secretary-treasurer of the California AFL-CIO, in a march in Watsonville, Calif.

Strawberry campaign goes retail

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

AFL-CIO central labor councils from across the country took up the cause of struggling strawberry pickers from the fields of California, joining community and religious allies in a blitz of grocery stores to seek pledges of support for the workers.

The Sept. 16 events came on the second "national action day" on behalf of the workers, and they yielded a bumper crop of good will in many of the 53 cities where the activities were scheduled.

The day before, Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez and Secretary-Treasurer Dolores Huerta led 7,000 people in a rally and march in the Watsonville-Salinas area, where two-thirds of the state's strawberries are harvested by 12,000 workers toiling 12 hours a day for $8,000 a season.

The cry of "Independencia Campesinas" — "Farmworker Independence" — rang out as workers detailed their backbreaking daily labors in fields, often without fresh water and bathroom facilities.

"We're not asking for anything the growers can't give us," strawberry worker David Rocha told the crowd. "We only want what we and our families deserve and what is right and just. We are human beings."

Even if strawberry workers' pay was increased by 50 percent, the union estimates it would cost the industry only about five cents more per pound in the price of strawberries.

The nationwide events the following day included news conferences held by the AFL-CIO central labor councils, as well as visits to grocery stores to ask store managers and consumers to sign a pledge of support for the workers, and to urge the state's $650 million strawberry industry to improve working conditions.

Nine CLCs in Florida and Georgia sponsored store visits at 96 locations and gained pledges from 17 grocery stores, including Winn Dixie, one of the largest supermarket chains in the South. In fact, the president of Winn Dixie called the campaign's coordinator, Paul Vasquez, and requested a meeting.

Meanwhile, the San Francisco CLC kicked off the campaign with a news conference featuring Mayor Willie Brown, who signed the pledge card while also urging the community to support the workers. The CLC announced plans to target 100 Lucky stores in the area by the end of the month.

The press conference also included four members of the City Board of Supervisors, and officials of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and religious groups.

In Los Angeles, the newly elected executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles CLC, Miguel Contreras, held a news conference in front of City Hall with the support of four City Council members, the city controller and the city attorney. Contreras told reporters the CLC is planning 150 visits to Vonn supermarket stores by the end of the month.

In New York City, John Catsimataidis, chief executive officer of the city's largest chain of supermarkets, signed the pledge after meeting with Manhatten AFL-CIO Secretary Ted Jacobsen, UFW 1st Vice President Irv Hershenbaum and UFW Regional Director Sarah Johnson.

"I am proud to sign this pledge for the strawberry workers, just as I was proud to join Cesar Chavez 20 years ago in his effort to bring dignity to America's grape workers," Catsimataidis said. "Men and women need to be treated as human beings and paid a livable wage. I applaud the work of the UFW and support this effort."

The Denver CLC, along with Jobs with Justice and LCLAA, participated in a Mexican Independence Day Festival, where trade unionists distributed campaign leaflets and stickers.

In Seattle, after visits to seven Puget Consumer Coop stores, management agreed to contact the CEO of the company. Eight CLCs in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio also visited stores.

UAW members vote on Ford pact

UAW members will vote Sept. 29 on a tentative three-year contract with Ford Motor Co. that, for the first time, includes a guaranteed employment floor.

"This agreement is a tribute to the hard work and discipline of the UAW-Ford membership, the negotiators on both sides and to the constructive relationship we have built with Ford in recent years," UAW President Stephen P. Yokich and Vice President Ernest Lofton said in a joint statement. Lofton heads the union's Ford Department.

A contract summary distributed to the Ford workers Sept. 18 said the new contract would "overlay the existing job protections with a combination of innovative new incentives for the company to grow its business and a guaranteed minimum employment floor of 95 percent of the current number of" UAW-represented jobs. The UAW represents 105,000 Ford employees.

Following a first-year up-front lump-sum payment of $2,000, Ford employees would receive a 3 percent general wage increase in the second and third years. Along with Christmas bonuses and cost-of-living adjustments, the average Ford worker would gain $13,900 over the term of the contract, the union said.

Retirees would gain enhanced inflation protection, and health care benefits would be improved. The contract also would provide the first-ever tuition assistance plan for children of Ford workers and retirees.

The new agreement reflects the priorities set by UAW earlier this year. Rejecting the notion that better wages and job security are unattainable in a global economy, the union set those two issues as the top bargaining priorities.

"The UAW's commitment to the twin goals of job and income security is more important than ever," the union said in a 200-page 1996 collective bargaining program adopted by the union's special bargaining convention.

The UAW still has negotiations with the other two Big Three automakers — General Motors, where it represents 216,000 workers, and Chrysler, where it represents about 80,000.

— James B. Parks

AFL-CIO NEWS

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INSIDE



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Enthusiasm ran high in Chicago as trade unionists put working family issues front and center at the Democratic National Convention.
See story, Page 1.

ORGANIZING

1 *Elected leaders plan for change, growth*

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Ideas, Info and Ammo for AFL-CIO Leaders and Activists OCTOBER 1996

America @work

The AFL-CIO News will retire as new publication debuts.
See story, Page 8.

AFL-CIO NEWS

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 17 OCTOBER 14, 1996

Campaign foils anti-worker Congress



Allen Zak Photography

Jean Fightmaster of AFSCME is interviewed by the local television station in Columbus, Ohio, as unions and their allies took Working Women Vote Week coast to coast. **See story, Page 4.**

Voter turnout efforts take hold

Electronic voter guides punctuate Labor '96 drive

By Michael Byrne

More than 10,000 new union activists are busy in congressional districts across the country, explaining the issues to their union brothers and sisters and urging them to get out and vote this Nov. 5.

Labor '96 has moved into the all-important get-out-the-vote (GOTV) phase, as AFL-CIO and affiliated union staff have dispersed to help coordinators mobilize union workers around issues important to working families.

At the same time, the federation was airing new television and radio voter guides providing information to voters on where candidates stand on the issues.

"The electronic voter guides are one more step in the AFL-CIO's continuing effort to raise the issues that are central to the lives of working Americans and to shine a light on Congress's and candidates' records with respect to those issues," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney.

"We plan to continue to lobby officeholders and would-be officeholders to adopt positions on issues like education, health care and retirement security that are good for working people," he said.

This year, working women were being engaged in the political discussion as never before, with a full week of outreach cosponsored by the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department and 9to5, the National Association of Working Women. **(See story, Page 4.)**

The AFL-CIO's issues-based campaign continued to draw fire from the Republican Party leadership, which filed suit to force the Federal Election Commission to act on its numerous complaints. The suit amounts to "another publicity stunt," said AFL-CIO General Counsel Jon Hiatt, who said it was filed "to distract public attention from the real issue in this

Continued on Page 4

FedEx special favor is disappointment

By Mike Hall

The 104th Congress that roared like a dangerous lion when it came to Washington last year armed with a "Contract on America" left town meekly after passing an omnibus spending bill that left worker programs with funds and anti-worker riders on the shelf.

"This was a major victory," said AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor, who credited the federation's persistent, high-profile grass-roots campaign that kept the pressure on members of Congress in their home districts throughout the year.

Workers not only beat back assaults on programs important to working families and insidious attacks on unions, but they came away with a minimum wage increase that no one thought this Congress would pass.

Still, workers at Federal Express suffered a setback in their organizing attempts when the Senate passed an FAA measure that contained language, slipped into the bill at FedEx's behest, that the company could use to argue that its workers come under the auspices of the Rail Labor Act instead of the National Labor Relations Act.

The spending bill, with Labor/HHS appropriations and five other unfinished spending measures for fiscal 1997 wrapped into it, sailed through as the budget cutters kept their knives in check.

House Republicans earlier had passed a Labor/HHS bill that cut funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the National Labor Relations Board, education and training and wage enforcement services, as well as several anti-worker riders.

One of those provisions banned use of "official time" — the time union reps spend on labor-management programs and other representational activities — at the Social Security Administration and the Health Care Financing Administration. Another would have allowed prisoners to be paid less than the minimum wage to make products that compete with privately manufactured ones, thus undercutting the private sector.

House and Senate Democrats and the Clinton administration vowed to restore cuts in vital spending programs and fight the anti-worker provisions.

With campaigns beckoning, the end of the fiscal year approaching and still scarred from their government shutdowns when they refused to compromise on fiscal 1996 spending, GOP leaders backed down and dealt.

Continued on Page 4

Seven-year battle yields card-check win at SF Marriott

By Muriel H. Cooper

Workers at the Marriott Hotel in San Francisco won an historic, hard-fought victory for representation by the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 2.

The Marriott — the largest nonunion hotel in the city — agreed to recognize the local through a card-check agreement. The union is hoping to start contract negotiations by the end of the year.

"This is an historical breakthrough that is directly related to the local restructuring and its emphasis on organizing," said AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger in a ceremony attended by workers and San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, who applauded the recognition.

Marriott traditionally has resisted unions rather forcefully. "We look forward to a period of mutual respect between Marriott and the employees of their company here in San Francisco," said Bensinger.

Marriott had entered into a card-check agreement with the local years before it opened its doors in 1989. But then the hotel rejected moves by the union to implement the card check.

"Their definition was different than ours," said Michael Casey, the local's president. "We had a different interpretation of what the agreement was."

A legal battle and boycott ensued until 1995, when the parties agreed to mediation to settle the lawsuit short of a trial. Last month, Special Master John Kagel certified that a majority of the workers had signed cards authorizing the local to represent them.

The commitment of financial and human resources made this win happen, Casey said.

"We told our members that this fight is critical for us to continue to set standards for all working families," he said. "We realigned our resources and took $200,000 out of the strike fund and put it into organizing. Then the members agreed to use $2 a month in dues money for organizing.

"We had a strong in-house committee of about 60 workers who got cards signed in about a week," Casey said. "We also had many community allies who helped."

There is a valuable lesson in the San Francisco experience, Bensinger said. "The futility of going through the labor board process is so great that the AFL-CIO is less and less choosing that route.

Continued on Page 3

Strawberry campaign elevated to national cause

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

The fight for justice and dignity by California's strawberry pickers is being celebrated and publicized coast to coast.

The AFL-CIO and the Farm Workers have formed the National Strawberry Commission for Workers' Rights to counter the industry's California Strawberry Commission. The labor panel includes organizations from communities across the country — civil rights, women, religious, social, academic and civic.

In addition, the UFW is planning a tour of East Coast cities, from Boston to Washington, beginning Nov. 18 in Philadelphia. Strawberry workers will join in news conferences, meetings with politicians, presentations at universities and store visits.

The UFW's drive to organize 20,000 strawberry pickers who work the soil of millionaire strawberry growers 10 to 12 hours a day began last spring — and the entire labor movement has answered the call, beginning with a presentation to the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council Conference by two strawberry workers and UFW President Arturo S. Rodriguez in July.

Encouraged by the two national days of action and continuing efforts by the CLCs, Rodriguez traveled to Washington Oct. 10 to meet with AFL-CIO leaders and to plan new initiatives. In a speech to AFL-CIO staff, he explained the plight of the workers.

"Over the years, these workers have reported claims of sexual harassment, inadequate bathroom facilities, violations of wage and child labor laws, polluted drinking water for the workers, exposure to pesticides and employer mistreatment toward workers who demonstrate support for the union," he said. "And that's just to name a few."

Rodriguez thanked the labor movement for helping to rally public support for a living wage, proper field sanitation, health insurance, protection from arbitrary firings and a real voice for the workers.

Analysis by the California Institute of Rural Studies at the University of California at Davis found that a 50 percent increase in most of the workers' wages would result in no more than a five-cent increase in the price of a pint of strawberries. "Given the profitability of this crop — over $650 million a year gross — the industry can easily afford to provide a living wage for its workers," Rodriguez said.

In St. Louis, more than 100 Coalition of Labor Union Women members participated Sept. 28 in a demonstration at Sam's in support of the strawberry workers. Led by CLUW President Gloria Johnson, protesters met with the general manager and persuaded him to FAX to Sam's corporate office a leaflet and pledge to support the workers. The general manager also stated he "would encourage them to sign the pledge."

Meanwhile, central labor councils across the country continue to fulfill their commitment to gain support for the strawberry workers in their communities. During the Sept. 16 National Day of Action, council representatives visited 181 stores and obtained more than 90 signatures from store managers in support of the workers.

In Florida last week, seven new store managers signed the pledge to support the workers.

The CLC officers also have been successful in obtaining support from politicians in their communities. Several mayors and city council members have attended — and actively participated — in news conferences and store visits.

ORGANIZING

IBT flies with ValuJet

Mechanics at Atlanta-based ValuJet voted for Teamsters representation, with 42 of the eligible 70 workers casting their ballots in favor of the union.

The mechanics wanted representation because of the company's subcontracting practices, which were blamed for maintenance problems and may have been responsible for a crash outside Miami this year that killed everyone on board.

The Flight Attendants previously won the right to represent the attendants and have continued to press the carrier over the safety issue. ValuJet got clearance to resume operations in early October.

SEIU gains 3,000

A unit of 3,000 Puerto Rican workers, members of the Sindicato Puertorriqueno de Trabajadores (SPT), has affiliated with the Service Employees.

SEIU President Andy Stern made the announcement Oct. 8 in Puerto Rico, where he met with the health care and educational workers at various hospitals and schools who are members of UNTS, an SEIU affiliate.

RWDSU wraps up unit

Workers at Andrew Marc Outerwear Co. in Secaucus, N.J., voted 23-5 for representation with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

The key issue for the predominately Hispanic workers was discrimination in wages. When workers approached management to ask for a raise, they were given two alternatives — get back to work or get out.

"They knew they had another alternative," said RWDSU Secretary-Treasurer Stuart Appelbaum. "They contacted the union."

Coral Gables picks UNITE

Workers at Coral Gables Convalescent Center in Miami voted 31-20 for UNITE representation.

"It's a simple matter of respect. That's what we want, and that's what we voted for today," said Prima Washington, a 20-veteran at the center.



LIUNA photo

New Laborers Local 79 demolition workers celebrate a "dynamite" New York City victory.

LIUNA blasts through 'whole market'

Nearly 1,000 demolition workers in New York City have joined Laborers Local 79 and signed a pact with benefits and increased wages.

The LIUNA organizing victory follows the pattern of a similar drive this year by Local 78, which organized most of the city's asbestos abatement workers. The industrywide campaign with the demolition workers increased the union's market share from 5 percent to roughly 75 percent.

The "whole market" approach combined rank-and-file involvement and support from other unions.

The local went in with 20 member organizers and conducted an education campaign on U.S. labor laws and the right to organize. Most of the workers are recent Ecuadoran immigrants who were unfamiliar with the power of a union.

"We conducted more than 15 pickets and strikes in the first 10 days of the campaign," said member organizer Mike Hellstrom. "The response and turnout of the nonunion workers was really inspiring. Out of 1,200 workers, we ended up with 300 hardcore member organizers."

They talked to workers about 12-hour days without overtime, health insurance and workers' compensation, said organizer Dave Johnson. "Broken toes and fingers were common," he said. "Workers were told to wrap broken fingers and 'get back to work.' "

The workers targeted demolition contractors working on high-profile commercial buildings and conducted several "organized walk-outs" that paralyzed a number of job sites. The local also received support from the Teamsters.

"When the Teamsters would drive up to haul the trash and saw our pickets, they would honor the pickets and drive away," said Johnson. "We were able to shut jobs down because of their support." The four-year contract calls for a two-tier wage system that will double and in the case of the more experienced workers almost triple their pay and provide much-needed health insurance.

— Muriel H. Cooper

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO, LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

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Poorly treated Tyson workers go for RWDSU

Mississippi plant resists, but union breaks through

By Muriel H. Cooper

Workers at Tyson Chicken became fed up with the sexual harassment and favoritism displayed in the Cleveland, Miss., plant and voted 248-195 on Oct. 4 for representation by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

"They were ready," organizer Regina Hicks said. "They were tired of the unfair treatment and knew they needed a union to make changes."

The story at Tyson is typical not only of the indignities suffered by thousands of poultry workers in nonunion plants, but of the bullying tactics that businesses use to thwart union efforts.

"Poultry workers are the most exploited workers in this country," said RWDSU President Lenore Miller. "We have been organizing poultry workers for many years, and unfortunately, the same problems exist."

Tyson's corporate behavior was "pretty obscene," RWDSU Secretary-Treasurer Stuart Appelbaum said. Injured workers were forced to "return to the line," sometimes dripping human blood on the chicken. Restroom breaks were limited to one seven-minute slot a day, forcing workers to urinate while standing on line. Female workers were subjected to sexual harassment from supervisors, he said.

"I think the catalyst was the absentee policy," said RWDSU's David Mertz. "The policy went from all workers having to bring a doctor's note for excused absences to no excuses, including medical reasons, for some employees.

"I think this just hit people that while the old policy was lousy, the new policy wasn't being administered fairly or equally."

Outside the plant, the company was just as busy making life unpleasant for the workers by trying to solicit the community into joining their anti-union stance.

There are no other unionized plants in Cleveland and, in the anti-union South, Tyson was able to scare many in the community with threats that the plant would close if the union came in. They had people call the workers and tell them not to support the union, Hicks said.

But the workers refused to be cowed. One worker was in the beauty parlor when someone warned that she would lose her job if she supported the union. "The worker told her, 'well, I support the union,' " Hicks said.

Tyson was less successful with the religious community, which was asked to sign on to an anti-union ad. But two prominent ministers refused to sign the ad, saying they wanted to talk to the workers. Later, they advised plant managers to "throw the ads in the garbage," she said.



IBT photo

Striking Diamond Walnut workers, members of the Teamsters, rally in front of the parent Sun Diamond Growers headquarters in Pleasanton, Calif., calling on the U.S. Department of Agriculture to bar the company from government business after a bribery conviction. The USDA later did just that, for a three-year period.

Unions fight corporate scofflaws

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney delivered a clear and unequivocal message that unions will fight back against employers who break the law in efforts to stave off workers' desire for a union.

Sweeney was in Everett, Mass., for an Oct. 7 rally to support workers at Richmark International, a curtain maker that in September fired five employees who signed union authorization cards and laid off three more for distributing union literature before work.

About 40 workers responded in a show of solidarity and an unfair labor practice strike on Sept. 20. They are seeking to organize under the UNITE banner.

"We're here to bear witness to a simple truth: organizing a union is your right," Sweeney said. "Firing working people for organizing unions is wrong. As long as workers are fired for an injustice, we are going to be fired up for justice."

Sweeney joined a march with the workers and community leaders, then told the rally that "Richmark workers, like thousands of other workers in the nation, are trying to improve their lives, their families and their communities."

"It is wrong for the big foot of business to try and crush them," he said. "From here on out, organized labor says to Richmark and companies like them: 'We will fight you whether it's in Everett or Birmingham, Akron or Spokane.' "

The workers, mostly immigrant Latino women, sew curtains for such stores as J.C. Penney's, Filene's Basement and Sears. Most of the workers have not received a raise in nine years, are timed by supervisors when they go to the bathroom and can't afford health insurance.

"Richmark International is a perfect example of how workers' rights are trampled when they try to exercise their democratic right to join a union," said Robin Clark, UNITE's organizing director for the Northeast.

The union also has asked the state attorney general to investigate the company for homework violations.

"First off, the company doesn't have a homework permit," Clark said. "Then they are sending work home and paying workers between $1.50 and $3 per pound. It usually takes a couple of hours just to sew a pound."

— Muriel H. Cooper

UNITE dramatizes Broadway injustice

On Broadway, the curtain is going up on a drama that audiences don't get a chance to see.

UNITE is telling theater-goers that, while Broadway producers and theater owners enjoy record ticket sales, the workers who make costumes are working without health insurance or retirement benefits.

In an industry that is largely unionized, only half of the approximately 800 costume makers have union protections. These costume makers have lower wages and fewer benefits than any other skilled worker in the theatrical industry.

"The companies belonging to the League of American Theaters and Producers should take responsibility for the conditions under which costumes for their shows are made," the union said.

The union has been leafleting outside Broadway theaters and other theaters around the country.

HERE gains historic victory at San Francisco Marriott

Continued from Page 1

"This victory stands for the proposition that if we ignore the outdated NLRB process and unite the progressive forces in the community and fight with all our resources and creativity for the right of all working people, we can reverse the lopsided balance of power which is concentrating an incredible excess of power in the hands of big corporations," he said.

Local 2 now devotes 30 percent of its resources to organizing and plans to continue to use creative ways to gain members. "The National Labor Relations Act is a joke when it comes to organizing workers. That's just the way it is," Casey said.

"Workers' rights shouldn't be subject to bureaucracy. We have to use different strategies that are non-board, like neutrality agreements. That's the way to go."

The union's innovation has attracted the eye of government officials in San Francisco.

Mayor Brown said he endorsed the neutrality agreement and encouraged other employers to seek this method to conduct business with unions.



David Bacon/Impact Visuals

San Francisco Labor Council President Walter Johnson and HERE Local 2 President Michael Casey hold a picture of the Golden Gate Bridge, which symbolized the union as the bridge connecting workers and the city's hotels. At right is Mayor Willie Brown. AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger is at left.

Labor '96 tries to maximize 'people advantage'

Continued from Page 1

year's campaign — the Republican Congress's dismal record on working family issues such as Medicare, health care, education, taxes and pension rights."

The ads are protected by the First Amendment and comply with federal campaign laws, Hiatt pointed out. The Republicans previously had used threats of legal action against local TV and radio stations in an effort to keep the ads off the air, but only a handful of stations pulled the ads.

The ads are the most expensive part of the $35 million Labor '96 program approved by a special convention in March. But the union spending is only a drop in the bucket compared with the spending of business groups, which are on the way to again outspend labor groups by a 7-1 margin, AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal said.

"That spending advantage will be seen dramatically in the last month before the election," Rosenthal said. "Those Republicans who voted for business special interests and against workers now will be blitzing the airwaves with their commercials. We won't be able to match them in spending but, like always, we have the people advantage."

Unions hope the "people advantage" will be magnified this year with the massive mobilization through the Labor '96 campaign, making the vote of union households the key both for the re-election of President Clinton and for a wholesale housecleaning of the anti-worker Congress. To achieve this goal, the campaign has to overcome what Rosenthal calls the 40-40-40 problem.

"In a district with, say, 35,000 union members, 40 percent aren't registered. That leaves 21,000," he said. "Then, 40 percent likely won't vote, and we're down to 12,600. Of those, 40 percent may vote against their own economic interests. We have to do better than 7,560 union members out of 35,000 voting for pro-worker candidates."

Labor '96 is approaching this 40-40-40 problem at every level — seeking to get more union members registered to vote and mobilizing them to vote through a political education program that emphasizes not candidates or political parties, but where candidates stand on those issues important to them.

"The labor movement is united as never before for Labor '96," Sweeney said. He points not only to the unanimity of the March special convention, but also at the willingness of affiliated unions to share their membership lists for the coordinated campaign. The Political Department is working from a list of more than 15 million union members and retirees, nearly twice as many as in previous years.

The solidarity also is showing up in congressional districts, where affiliated unions have contributed more than half of the 158 coordinators now in the field. In addition, for get-out-the-vote activity, international unions are sending hundreds of staff into the field.

These workers will be going to union halls, plants and union members' homes to talk about the election, passing out candidate comparison fliers, making telephone calls and knocking on members' doors, among other activity.

In a conference call with Executive Council members Sept. 26, Sweeney urged international union presidents to join him, Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson on the campaign trail.

"In areas where their union members are concentrated, a visit from the union president could be crucial," Rosenthal said.

Union women poised to make difference

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Union working women vote — and if unions do their work this year, they'll bring their sisters, mothers and friends along to the polls.

The AFL-CIO and 9to5, the National Association of Working Women, cosponsored more than 250 activities nationwide Oct. 4-11 to kick off get-out-the-vote efforts aimed at turning out working women Nov. 5. Numerous surveys show the women's vote will be the deciding factor at the polls, and unions, community-based organizations, women's groups and religious leaders are reaching out to those potential voters throughout October.



Bill Burke/Page One Photography

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson talks kitchen-table economics and the women's vote at a Philadelphia news conference.

Low-income women without college degrees will be especially crucial at the polls, said Karen Nussbaum, director of the AFL-CIO's Working Women's Department. "They are the most volatile group politically and are angry their concerns are not being heard," she said.

Union members are going into grocery stores or shopping malls, day care centers, union halls and union worksites, during lunch breaks and after work, to urge their sisters to vote on issues important to working families — higher pay, real family values, fairness and respect on the job, Medicare, pensions, education and family leave.

In Columbus, Ohio, a voter registration drive through four local supermarkets signed up 800 voters.

Working women rallied in Atlanta, Denver, Boston, Milwaukee and other cities. Women pledging to vote received a piece of cake — and a piece of the action — courtesy of members of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers.

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, UNITE and other union members rallied in Philadelphia around the theme of "Don't Get Hung Out to Dry — Vote!!!" Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka participated in a rally in Minnesota.

Members of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, in partnership with the New York Hispanic Labor Committee, spent the week at the subway stop serving Bloomingdale's flagship New York City store registering working women and urging them to vote.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton took up the cause in Chicago, while Second Lady Tipper Gore addressed women in Pennsylvania.

Events also included door and "desk" knocking, kitchen table discussion groups, news conferences, meetings, phone banks, mailings, "corner waves" at busy intersections and many others.

In the end, attacks on workers fail

Continued from Page 1

Taylor noted that Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.), the ranking Democratic member on the Appropriations Committee, played a key role in securing the increased DOL, NLRB and education and training funding. Overall DOL funding was increased 9 percent over House levels. In addition, according to a DOL analysis, worker protections, including workplace health and safety, pension security and wage and hour enforcement jumped $78 million over House figures.

The extra $26 million for the Employment Standards Administration over fiscal 1996 means "efforts to eradicate garment sweatshops will be expanded; efforts to enforce the minimum wage and to protect workers' newly won family and medical leave rights will be enhanced and an initiative will be undertaken to improve the integrity of and accuracy of Davis-Bacon wage determinations," the Labor Department said.

The NLRB, a favorite target of the GOP, was slated for a 15 percent cut under the House bill. Instead, the omnibus bill increased its budget almost $5 million over the previous year. In addition, a favorite Republican rider that would have excluded all but larger companies from NLRB jurisdiction was dropped.

Employment Services also was fully funded — $58 million more than House Republicans wanted to provide in assistance for unemployed job seekers.

A program to assist dislocated workers with training and re-employment services received $193 million over House levels. Funds for the Joint Training and Partnership Act were protected from a GOP attempt to transfer most of the monies to other programs.

Funding for summer jobs, school-to-work programs, adult training and the Job Corps also was raised over Republican House figures.

Education also benefited greatly from the White House and Democrats' strong insistence that vital programs receive adequate funds.

"The public is well aware of the fact, even if the Republican caucus originally was not, that enrollments are rising," Obey said. "College costs are rising and local property taxpayers want relief."

Funding for nearly every major education program — many slashed in the GOP House budget — will be increased. Overall, spending is slated to be 22 percent more than fiscal 1996.

Goals 2000, eliminated in the House version, will receive $141 million above last year's level. Other education programs that received increases over Republican levels included Head Start and Healthy Start, remedial education for low-income students, programs to improve teachers skills, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, safe and drug-free schools, and such college loan programs as Pell grants and Perkins loans.

The special favor for FedEx in the FAA bill was not included in either House or Senate version, but added in conference, a highly unusual move. It puts up a roadblock for 45,000 Federal Express drivers and their drive to unionize, allowing the company to argue that those drivers would have to be organized companywide, rather than site by site.

The Teamsters, who along with the UAW have FedEx organizing drives under way, called the provisions "a crass attempt to further insulate the company from organizing."

Several FedEx employees spoke at a Capitol Hill news conference Oct. 3 describing how they helped build the company, but now are facing contracting out, reduced hours and harassment for their pro-union stands.

A vote to end a filibuster against the bill passed 66-31, and it was approved by a 92-2 vote.

OSHA survives, gets new funds

Republican attempts to undermine job safety and health failed in the 104th Congress.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act and Mine Safety and Health Act remain intact; OSHA, MSHA and National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health funding has been maintained or increased; and a prohibition on OSHA efforts to develop an ergonomics standard or guidelines has been lifted.

For fiscal 1997, OSHA's budget has been increased $22 million to $325 million, MSHA's budget is up by $2 million to $197 million and NIOSH's funding is up by $53 million to $173.5 million (including money transferred from the defunct Bureau of Mines).

However, the GOP can claim one victory — the passage of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, which gives small business special consideration in the establishment of regulations and increased rights in the enforcement process. The measure provides for congressional review and disapproval of new final regulations, politicizing the standard-setting process and setting up future safety and health battles.

"Reform" initiatives put forth by Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.) and Sens. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) and Nancy L. Kassebaum (R-Kan.) went nowhere, while a sweeping regulatory reform measure — part of the Republicans' "Contract On America" — was passed in the House but died in the Senate.

— Colleen M. O'Neill



Marianne Keffer Zweig/Page One Photography

Dave Rumpf, president of Steelworkers Local 7886, joined several dozen other union members in front of the Argentine embassy in Washington to support Argentinian workers' national day of protest.

Bridgestone calls most back

USWA fight will continue on unfair labor practices

By James B. Parks

Under pressure from the Steelworkers' corporate campaign, Bridgestone/Firestone has called virtually all the former strikers back to work.

That was the good news announced Sept. 24 by John Sellers, newly elected executive vice president of USWA's Rubber/Plastics Industry Conference, formerly the Rubber Workers.

"The continuing bad news is that up to 150 workers remain off the job because they were fired on trumped-up strike-related charges or as part of a long-standing harassment campaign against union members," Sellers said. That means the union's campaign will continue, he said.

The rest of the 2,300 workers illegally "permanently replaced" in 1994 by the Japanese-owned tire maker are back on the job, or have been notified to return to work, he said. The USWA and Bridgestone/Firestone have been unable to reach agreement on a contract since July 1994, when 4,000 workers walked off the job. The workers suspended the strike after 10 months.

Other unresolved issues include securing a fair contract, gaining millions of dollars in back pay the company owes the strikers under National Labor Relations Board rulings and settling the company's unfair labor practices, which the NLRB says prolonged the strike.

"We are more sure than ever of justice for the men and women who courageously struck this international renegade because of unfair labor practices more than two years ago," Sellers said. "So while our campaign clearly is working, it is far from over, and we are once again turning up the pressure."

USWA members at Bridgestone/Firestone plants in the United States now are working without a contract under company-imposed work rules. In addition, the union members are being harassed by "replacement" workers and false company charges that led to firings, Sellers said.

Workers at the Decatur, Ill., plant are working 12-hour shifts, first in a three-day week, then a four-day week, with erratic changes between day and night shifts, said Roger Gates, president of USWA Local 713. "People don't know whether they're coming or going, or what day of the week it is," he said.

The USWA is conducting an international "black flag" campaign against the Japanese-owned tire maker. The black flag is the traditional racing symbol for disqualifying a car for outrageous rules violations. The USWA's "black flag" campaign is asking consumers not to buy Bridgestone/Firestone products or services until all workers are returned to work with back wages and a fair contract is negotiated.

The campaign's successful pressure includes frequent union handbilling of customers at 140 Bridgestone-owned MasterCare centers in the United States and Canada. It has spawned resolutions by 31 local governments, including Atlanta, to stop buying the company's products and refusals to sell Bridgestone tires by many dealers, including the largest dealer in New Orleans.

In addition, Saturn has agreed to replace Firestone tires on its new cars with another brand at the request of buyers.

Ford, Chrysler pacts reached; UAW, GM talk

CAW strikes GM Canada; ripple felt in U.S. layoffs

UAW members overwhelmingly ratified a new contract with Ford Motor Co. the same day the union reached a tentative agreement with Chrysler Corp. patterned on the Ford deal.

The Chrysler pact was approved by the union's Chrysler Council Oct. 3 and was voted on by the membership in balloting that ended Oct 13. Talks are under way with General Motors Corp., but they have been slowed because of the Canadian Auto Workers' strike against General Motors Ltd. of Canada.

As a result of the Canadian shutdown, GM temporarily laid off about 1,800 workers at a Michigan transmission plant and a New York engine factory. If the CAW strike continues, more layoffs likely are in store.

The three-year Ford pact was approved by 90 percent of the production workers and 83 percent of skilled trades workers, who voted separately.

"Obviously, the breakthroughs achieved by the union on job security, higher wages, retirement income gains, tuition assistance benefits and other improvements were factors in the strong, favorable vote," said UAW President Stephen P. Yokich and Vice President Ernest Lofton, director of the union's Ford Department.

The three-year Ford and Chrysler contracts include expanded job security protections — which provide a guaranteed minimum employment floor of 95 percent of current covered jobs — incentives to keep work in plant and creation of new jobs.

Wages are increased substantially through an up-front, lump-sum payment of $2,000, followed by a 3 percent wage increase in the last two years, cost-of-living allowance protection and Christmas bonuses of up to $600 each.

In addition to substantial improvements in basic pension plan benefits, the union negotiated lump-sum payments for retirees that will protect against inflation.

Workers will be able to receive employer-paid tuition assistance of up to $1,000 a year for dependent children enrolled in college or any other approved post-secondary education. Retirees also can receive $1,000 a year if they enroll in courses on site at locations from which they retired.

— James B. Parks and Mike Hall

NABET uses media savvy in local TV contract fights

By Colleen M. O'Neill

Television industry employees used to working behind the scenes increasingly are finding themselves in the forefront, making noise and progress in labor disputes across the country.

Media-savvy locals of the Communication Workers' Broadcast Employees and Technicians in New York and California gained settlements after getting their messages into the community despite a virtual electronic media blackout of their disputes, while locals in New Mexico and Michigan are using similar tactics.

TV bosses black out labor disputes, so workers turn to boycott campaigns and flyovers to get the message to the public. The tactics are working.

Off-camera workers at Buffalo, N.Y.'s WIVB-TV, members of NABET-CWA Local 25, approved a new three-year contract after a six-month campaign to get viewers and advertisers to boycott the station. The new contract boosts starting pay to $400 a week from $268 and adds dental and eyeglass coverage to medical benefits.

Workers handbilled outside Rich Stadium and used flyovers of Buffalo Bills' games with banners that said: "Turn Off News 4 — It's Bad News for Its Workers." Bus shelter signs also kept the campaign in the public eye.

The most recent ratings reflect the effectiveness of the union's campaign, as the station fell from its first-place position in the spring rankings.

The protracted fight also resulted in a Federal Communications Commission complaint after all of Buffalo's radio stations declined to run the NABET-CWA boycott message, and National Labor Relations Board charges after an incident between the station's sales manager and union employees handbilling outside an advertiser's business.

In California, members of NABET-CWA Local 53 won an 11 percent wage increase, more vacation and improved medical and benefits eligibility in a three-year pact with the National Captioning Institute. The nonprofit NCI had been insisting on a wage freeze and a cut in shift differential pay for the workers, who produce the closed captioning service used by the deaf and hard-of-hearing on network, cable and syndicated television programming.

Meanwhile, an advertisers' boycott and a "Turn Off 10" campaign at McGraw-Hill-owned KGTV in San Diego culminated in a new three-year contract for Local 54.

The pact features an 11 percent pay raise over term, additional holiday and vacation leave for temporary workers — and jurisdiction for work on video file servers, Internet and at the company's new cable operation, News Channel 15.

Local 407 in Albuquerque, N.M., has been seeking a first contract for a year with Pulitzer-owned KOAT-TV, and has gained community support by wiring around the local broadcast media with news conferences, picketing and letters to advertisers. A federal mediator is trying to facilitate a settlement.

In the Motor City, where newspaper workers at the Detroit News and Free Press also are locked in a labor struggle, members of NABET-CWA Local 43 are pushing aggressive viewer and advertising boycotts of WJBK-TV, and have distributed more than 10,000 buttons and bumper strips that read "Turn-off Fox TV2."

BARGAINING

Steelworkers strike

Some 4,500 Steelworkers walked off the job Oct. 1 at eight Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel plants after the company refused to bring its pension plan near industry standards, sought to subcontract jobs and eliminate workers' current health plan.

Pickets remain up at plants throughout Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

USWA negotiators are seeking a defined pension plan paying retirees $40 per month per year of service. But the company, which currently has pension costs about one-quarter of that of other steelmakers, wants a risky defined contribution plan with benefits based on the investment performance of its pension funds.

While the company claims its pension proposal would pay retirees between $1,200 and $1,600 a month, only 200 of the 4,500-member work force would qualify for those pension levels.

The company also wants to outsource work, including production work, and eliminate all non-steelmaking jobs, such as crane operators, janitors and nurses.

The company proposed eliminating the current health insurance plan and replacing it with a managed health care plan that not only would raise costs but would limit workers' choice of doctors and prescription drugs.

Peace on the rails

A dozen railroad unions and 35 major freight carriers have reached agreement on five-year contracts covering some 145,000 workers nationwide, marking the first time in nearly a decade accord was reached without strikes or imposed settlements.

The bargaining was far from uneventful, however, with the creation of three presidential emergency boards, intensive mediation, several voluntary agreements and an arbitration award. Still out for ratification is a tentative agreement between the National Carriers' Conference Committee and the Firemen and Oilers, while the American Train Dispatcher Department, a division of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, remains in negotiations.

ILA ratifies contract

Longshoremen on the East and Gulf Coasts approved a five-year master agreement Oct. 2 that calls for a $4-an-hour pay increase over the life of the contract.

The master agreement covers wages, hours, duration and employer contributions to the health and pension funds. Workers will immediately receive a $2-an-hour increase, followed by $1-an-hour raises in 1998 and 2000. Employer contributions to the health and welfare and pension funds will increase by 96 cents an hour by the end of the contract.

Other provisions include flextime arrangements, lower pay for new hires and a reduction in gang size required per container. Both sides agreed to move to an industrywide managed health system by 1999.

ILWU pact approved

On the West Coast, Longshoremen and Warehousemen approved a three-year contract calling for a $3-an-hour pay raise over the term of the pact for 8,000 dockworkers in 26 ports.

Skill rate differentials increased, as did the maximum pension benefit for future retirees. The ILWU held on to current levels of benefits including medical, dental and vision. The contract is retroactive to June 29.

The vote was the second on the agreement. In the first vote, 52 percent of the members approved the contract, but the vote fell short of a majority in two of the eight ILWU voting districts, Los Angeles and San Francisco. In order to protect the interests of minority groups of workers, union rules require a second vote with a 60 percent approval rate.

IBT gets first contract

By an 84 percent majority, more than 750 pilots and flight engineers at American Trans Air Inc., represented by the Teamsters, ratified their first contract.

The agreement provides a 7.5 percent raise over four years, the first pay boost since 1990. It also sets up more clearly defined scheduling procedures.

Crews voted for IBT representation in 1993, and in 1995, turned down a tentative agreement by a 3-1 margin. Don Treichler, an IBT representative, said the crews wanted pay and scheduling improvements.

The Indianapolis-based airline serves Boston, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Las Vegas, Phoenix and other cities.

IAM seeks strength in numbers

Chicago

In a landmark convention, the Machinists charted an innovative new course for the future that includes growth and solidarity, more emphasis on organizing and political action.

The delegates approved a resolution "wholeheartedly endorsing and supporting" the proposed unification of the IAM with the UAW and Steelworkers to create the second-largest industrial union in the world.

In his keynote, IAM President George Kourpias distinguished the development as a unification, rather than a merger, noting that "we will be drafting an entirely new constitution that will guide an entirely new union into a new century." The three unions already have begun cooperative efforts.

"Strength and power, that's what this unification is all about," USWA President George Becker told the convention before the vote. "This is not a unification being forged out of weakness. Each union is a strong union; each is rich in resources and capabilities."

"The trade union movement is a social movement," said Paul Masseron, assistant to UAW President Stephen P. Yokich. "This is about the future of our country. This is about whether Wall Street gets to decide everything or whether workers have some say in our destiny."

The delegates also tackled the sticky question of how to improve and expand member services and how to pay for them. The proposal on the floor was a constitutional change reducing the mandated strike fund contribution from 20 percent of monthly per capita to 5 percent in 1997 and 10 percent in 1999. The money saved, $22.6 million the first two years and $7.5 million each year thereafter, would be used for organizing, communications, education and other services.

"If we want to be 'The Union for the 21st Century (the convention motto),' we need to make some changes," said delegate Bob Klepper of Lodge 733. "We need to do more organizing. We need some more staff."

Ultimately, the delegates agreed with Frank Souza of Lodge 1414, who declared, "Like all unions, we are losing members and we're losing money. And we're running out of options. We can either lay off staff, reduce our programs, raise our dues — or adopt this amendment." They adopted the amendment by a 2-1 margin.

Recognizing the growing role of women in the workplace and in the union, the delegates unanimously approved creation of a Women's Department to educate members on the needs and problems of working women, and to train and encourage more women to take leading roles at all levels of the union.

Earlier in the week, Coalition of Labor Union Women President Gloria Johnson urged the convention to organize women and to help all working women. "It's a disgrace that in this country, where nearly 60 million women are working, only 8 million belong to trade unions or associations," said Johnson, a vice president of the AFL-CIO and the Electronic Workers.

But in an election year, most of the talk was about politics. The delegates endorsed President Clinton and Vice President Gore for re-election. Appearing via satellite, Clinton pledged to continue to fight to protect workers' right to strike.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney and a host of other speakers urged the union to vote like workers and to win in November. This year is "the year that we either take back control of our country or allow the radical right, the new right and the not quite right to tighten their grip on the soul of our nation," Sweeney said.

Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka challenged the delegates to take the fight "out of the suites and back to the streets" to win economic justice and social dignity for workers and their families.

House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.) promised a worker-friendly agenda if Democrats regain control of Congress in November. The centerpiece of that new agenda would be to keep good-paying jobs in America. "A good job lies at the foundation of everything we care about in this country," he said.

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich offered a "simple solution" to deal with those in Washington who "don't want worker safety, minimum wages, education, job training and who don't like unions. There's a simple solution. Send them home."

Other speakers included Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Director John Calhoun Wells; Canadian Labor Council President Bob White; Alexa McDonough, leader of Canada's New Democratic Party; and Bill Press, co-host of CNN's Crossfire.

— James B. Parks

LIUNA pledges organizing, sets election

Las Vegas

Delegates to the Laborers 21st convention recommitted the union to massive organizing efforts and prepared for the first election of LIUNA's top officers by rank-and-file members.

"To meet the mandate of this convention in organizing, we will pour in reinforcements to the greatest organizing campaign ever waged," LIUNA President Arthur A. Coia told the delegates. "We must ensure that all workers have basic human rights, dignity and respect."

The convention passed resolutions calling for greater use of volunteer organizers, expanding a program to organize nonunion contractors and establishing regional organizing branches.

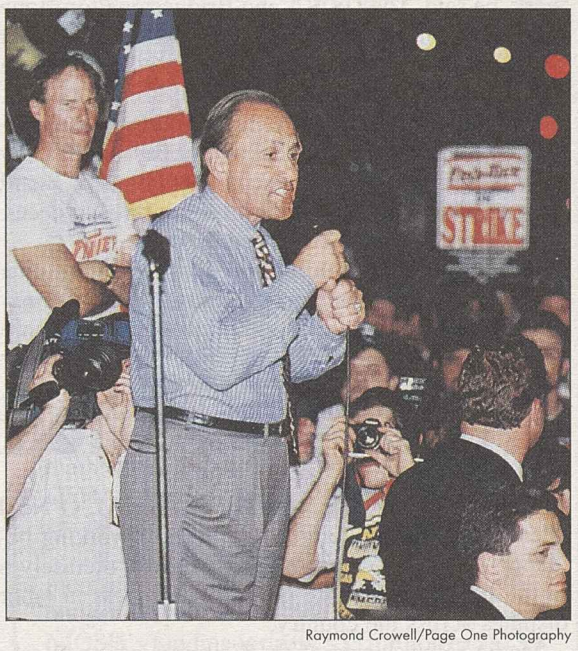
Using member organizers in "whole market" campaigns in New York City, the union has signed up most of the asbestos abatement and demolition workers in the city. Member organizers also have been instrumental in providing union benefits to poultry workers in North Carolina and environmental remediation workers in California.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney applauded LIUNA's organizing efforts. "With commitments like yours, we're going to keep winning contract battles and we're going to win at the ballot boxes in November, because labor is indeed back."

In its first secret-ballot election, delegates nominated Coia and Bruno Caruso, president of Local 1001 in Chicago, to appear on the ballot for president, which will go to the general membership from Nov. 2 through Dec. 16.

Secretary-Treasurer R.P. "Bud" Vinall was renominated without opposition and so won a full term in office to run through 2001.

Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena addressed the delegates via live satellite link and read a message from President Clinton, who thanked the union members for playing a key role in making the nation stronger. Clinton's message ticked off a number of Republican efforts against working families that were turned back this year, including attempts to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act, gut the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and allow "legal companyunions."



Raymond Crowell/Page One Photography

Laborers President Arthur A. Coia rallies convention delegates in support of striking Frontier Hotel workers.

Other speakers included Bob White, president of the Canadian Labour Congress; Martin Maddaloni, president of the Plumbers and Pipefitters; Robert A. Georgine, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department; former Democratic vice presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro; film and television actress Pamela Reed, the daughter of LIUNA's secretary-treasurer; Olympic gold medalist Matt Biondi; Nevada Gov. Bob Miller; and Las Vegas Mayor Jan Jones.

Addressing the convention via satellite or video were: Reps. Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo), David E. Bonior (D-Mich.) and William Clay (D-Mo), and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.).

— Sharolyn A. Rosier

Labor teach-in rekindles bond with academia

Enthusiasm for issues of workers spills over

By Colleen M. O'Neill

A rebounding labor movement and a newly interested academic community bridged a chasm of two generations' duration with a huge, overflow crowd in attendance at a teach-in at Columbia University.

Lines stretched several blocks as nearly 2,000 people gathered for the Oct. 3 opening of "The Fight for America's Future: A Teach-In with the Labor Movement," packing the Law Library, a spillover hall and the area outside the event.

During the first half of the 20th century, labor and intellectuals were allied on behalf of social justice, democracy in the workplace and the economic well-being of working Americans. That compact disintegrated during the Vietnam War years.

"Here's the truth: when faced with a changing culture as well as a changing economy, the labor movement hunkered down," said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney. "Relationships torn apart in the 1960s and '70s went unrepaired. The labor movement became isolated and introverted, concerned more with our own deepening crisis than with the world around us.

"My brothers and sisters, workers and their unions need you, and you need us," he said. "We need your help in making basic economic education available and accessible to every American, so everyone can understand what is happening to their family budget and who is doing it to them.

"We need your help in exposing the flaws of our society," Sweeney said. "While it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a union to get a raise."

Helping Sweeney open the historic convocation were feminist author Betty Friedan, Harvard theologian Cornel West, University of Virginia philosopher Richard Rorty, Columbia University historian Eric Foner and Columbia University law professor Patricia Williams.

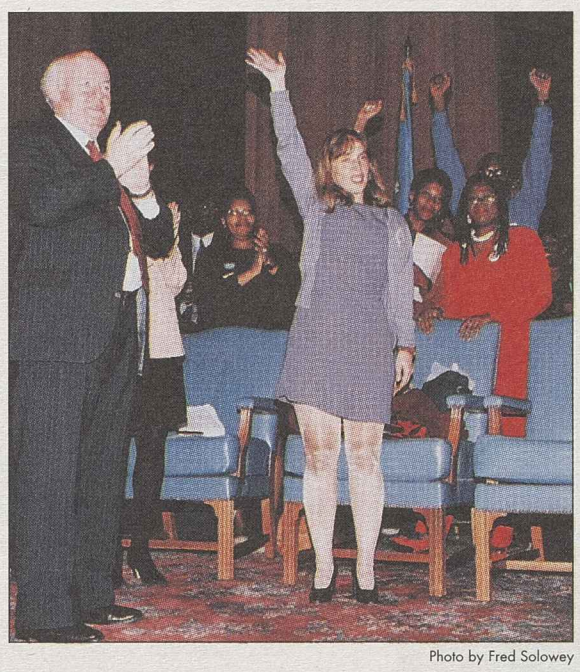


Photo by Fred Solowey

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney cheers several dozen Barnard College workers who mounted a courageous strike against the administration this year. They joined an overflow crowd at Columbia University for the first of 10 nationwide labor teach-ins.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, and several federation department leaders participated in sessions held Oct. 4 at the New York City campus. Workshop topics included immigration, the globalized economy, organizing among African-Americans, welfare and work, families and feminism, labor political action and culture, identity and class politics.

Other teach-ins will be held throughout October. They are designed not only to renew ties between academe and unions, but also to teach students about the labor movement and get students and professors to use their talents to help working Americans.

Events are planned at Wayne State University, Detroit; University of Cincinnati; Clinch Valley College, Wise, Va.; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Ill.; University of Texas at El Paso; University of Florida, Tallahassee; University of Wisconsin, Madison; and State University of New York-Geneseo.

NEWSMAKERS

AWARDS

The National Consumers League honored Labor Secretary **Robert B. Reich** as the 1996 Trumpeter Award recipient for speaking out for social justice and the rights of consumers.

Pharis Harvey, executive director of the International Labor Rights Fund, and **Young Shin**, executive director of the Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, received the Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Awards for their crusades against child labor abroad and sweatshops in the United States.

DEATH

Peter J. Brennan, one of New York's most prominent labor leaders and U.S. secretary of labor from 1973-1975, died of lymphatic cancer. He was 78.

Brennan, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York, was appointed by President Richard M. Nixon to be labor secretary after Brennan organized construction unions and workers to support Nixon and the Vietnam War.

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich praised Brennan's government service to workers, noting that his tenure was marked by laws protecting pensions and employment rights of the disabled, as well as strictly enforced workplace safety laws.

In 1975, Brennan return to New York and resumed the presidency of the construction trades council, a post he held until he retired in 1992. He also served as vice president of the state AFL-CIO and the New York City Central Labor Council.

Brennan is survived by two daughters, one son, one brother, eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

RESOURCES

Union Issues for Working Women at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies Oct. 20-25 will explore new strategies and approaches to tap the energy that women can bring to the labor movement. Session topics will include politics, economics, organizing, leadership, safety and health, problem solving and planning, effective presentations, power writing and working within the power structure. To register, call 301/431-5422.

The American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark will display the **A. Philip Randolph Traveling Exhibit** through Nov. 9. Visiting hours are Wednesday through Saturday 1-4 p.m. or by appointment. The museum is located at 83 Norwood St., Haledon, N.J.

The Chicago Federation of Labor's **Union Images Art Exhibit** will be exhibited Nov. 4-8 in the atrium of the James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph in the Windy City. The exhibit, which is the result of a juried competition sponsored by the federation in celebration of its 100th anniversary, includes works of art portraying life on the job and in unions. Contact Elena Marcheschi at 312/565-9431.

PUBLICATIONS

Organizing for Change, Changing to Organize! is available through the AFL-CIO's Support Services Department. Single copies of the report, published by the AFL-CIO Elected Leadership Task Force on Organizing, are free and may be obtained by calling 202/637-5041, or FAXing 202/637-5058.

Government that Works is a new book of case histories of multiple federal facilities that threw away the book on standard operating procedures and started over with worker-management cooperation. Contact AFGE at 202/639-6419.

CONFERENCE

The AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute conference **American Workforce in Transition** will be held Dec. 7-10, 1996, at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. Contact Carol Claggett at 800/842-HRDI (4734).

UNION NEWS

Boycott Crown Petroleum

At the request of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, Crown Central Petroleum has been added to the AFL-CIO boycott list.

Last February, Crown's managers escorted all 250 members of OCAW Local 4-227 from its oil refinery in Pasadena, Texas, while the union and the company continued to bargain. These workers remain locked out, with Crown citing the pretext of "sabotage" and the "unsuccessful status of negotiations," according to the union.

However, the day after the lockout began, Crown stated in a letter to the union that "when you accept our proposal, we will end the lockout."

Ohio on the march

Ohio trade unionists will consider a statewide work stoppage and march on Columbus to protest anti-worker initiatives in Congress and the Ohio General assembly. The Ohio AFL-CIO convention approved forming a committee to draw up plans.

Some 900 delegates to the convention capped off the gathering's first day in Cincinnati with a march and rally protesting the privatization of that city's only public hospital. The march was led by state fed President Bill Burga, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson and the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson.

Delegates also signaled approval of a ballot initiative for riverboat gambling in four locations, but only if such a move would not cut funding for public schools and if workers are allowed to exercise their rights to join unions and bargain.

Illinois rallies for votes

November elections were front and center at the Illinois AFL-CIO convention in Chicago, as AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka urged delegates to work exhaustively to elect labor-friendly representatives.

"We can have that workers' victory, from the courthouses to the statehouses to the White House, if you make a commitment in this important political year," Trumka said.

Food and Commercial Workers President Douglas H. Dority called for using an issues-oriented approach to the election and beyond. "We must see our efforts for victory in November as a starting point, as a first step in our long-term effort to revitalize the labor movement."

Sweeney: Do right

The November election is about "taking back control of our country or giving it away to the radical right, the new right and the not-quite-so right," AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney told the 210 delegates at the Nevada AFL-CIO convention.

He urged delegates to pledge 30 hours of their time to work for candidates they believe in and who support such working family issues as Medicare, Social Security, education, workplace health and safety, labor laws and American jobs.

The convention re-elected Claude "Blackie" Evans as executive secretary-treasurer and Walt Elliot as president. Delegates also approved a $5,000 donation to striking Frontier Hotel workers who entered their fifth year on the picket lines last month — the longest-running strike in the United States.

N.Y. re-elects top officers

New York State AFL-CIO President Edward J. Cleary and Secretary-Treasurer Paul F. Cole won unanimous re-election to new four-year terms by the 1,000 delegates to the federation's 28th constitutional convention.

Meeting under the theme "one movement, one voice, one agenda," the convention heard from AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.), Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), various state politicians, Transport Workers President Sonny Hall and several AFL-CIO department leaders.

After much vociferous discussion, delegates made endorsements in 27 of 31 congressional races. In addition, participants attended a variety of workshops on such topics as political participation, organizing, union label, the economy, health care, job safety, education and retirement planning.





The AFL-CIO News was on hand to record history. At left, President Dwight D. Eisenhower helps AFL-CIO President George Meany set the cornerstone at the headquarters building in 1955. President John F. Kennedy addressed the AFL-CIO convention on Nov. 14, 1963, as reported in the Nov. 16 issue of the News, and was killed in Dallas on Nov. 22, reported in the Nov. 23 issue.

AFL-CIO News, chronicler of labor events, retires

By Michael Byrne

With this issue, the *AFL-CIO News* closes a chapter in labor communications that has marked time for organized workers since the 1955 merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

The *News* is being retired in favor of a new official publication, *America@work*, a monthly magazine aimed at providing union leaders and activists with information they can use to build a stronger labor movement.

America@work, debuting this month, will focus on the new vision for the labor movement, the strategies and tactics that are helping unions grow and the activists who are leading the charge. The new magazine also will offer readers a chance to talk back.

The *AFL-CIO News* has had its day, and it was effective in telling the story of unions working together for change.

The *News* was created out of the *CIO News* and the *AFL News Reporter* back in late 1955. The debut issue featured a triumphant George Meany of the AFL and Walter Reuther of the CIO at the merger convention, where Meany was elected president.

That first convention passed a resolution inaugurating a public relations program that would "use all available media, including radio and television." It also urged unions to "support the labor press, and particularly the new *AFL-CIO News*."

To edit the new weekly newspaper, AFL-CIO President George Meany brought in a young Newspaper Guild activist, Saul Miller, who for 25 years directed not only the *AFL-CIO News*, but also the *Federationist,* a monthly magazine that ceased publication in the early 1980s.

Miller told his staff that the *AFL-CIO News* was, in essence, the hyphen between the AFL and the CIO. It would cover all union activity impartially and objectively, and it should do nothing to indicate that it favored any one union over another.

That first year featured the move into a new headquarters building, dedicated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who declared that "labor is the United States." Later that year, after much public soul-searching through the pages of the *AFL-CIO News,* the federation endorsed Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate who sought to unseat Eisenhower.

Throughout its existence, the *AFL-CIO News* commanded a degree of respect and credibility among opinion leaders and members of the press. It was the only publication that exclusively covered the labor movement, and its currency was information, not rhetoric.



President Jimmy Carter was in attendance for George Meany's funeral in 1980, where AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland said, "It is to the honor and credit of this trade union movement that we clung to his leadership as long as we could; that we kept him as long as the Lord would let us, for he was, to his last day, the best there was."

AFL-CIO News photos

"The journalistic standards of the *AFL-CIO News* never changed during my time there," said John Barry, managing editor from 1968 to 1988. "We were pro-labor, of course, but we maintained a semblance of objectivity. We were careful not to provide unattributed editorial comments."

Rex Hardesty, who had edited the *Federationist* until it was retired in 1982, helped to change the face of the *News* when he became director of the department in 1986. He eliminated the editorial page, arguing that editorials were redundant in a publication that should reflect the position of the AFL-CIO in every story. And, in an economic move necessitated by higher postal rates, he instituted the current biweekly format and four-color production.

The brighter, more accessible *News* was a major departure from the traditional "gray lady" that chronicled the labor movement for decades.

"I wanted to redesign the paper when I arrived back in 1961," Barry recalled. "But Saul told me that Mr. Meany wouldn't hear of changing it. Twenty years later, after Meany died, I was told to redesign it. But I only made some slight changes, like going from five to four columns and adding some boxes."

The labor press always has been crucial to the success of the *AFL-CIO News.* Since the *News* circulated primarily to leadership, currently to about 53,000, the federation has depended on union newspapers to pass along to union members the information and message of the unified labor movement. In recent years, that has been facilitated electronically through LaborNET and the federation's home page on the Internet.

The *AFL-CIO News* mandate to promote solidarity became even more important after Meany died, when President Lane Kirkland inherited a labor movement under siege from a new Republican president, who stacked the National Labor Relations Board in favor of business and fired striking Air Traffic Controllers. The *News* played a key role in promoting two Solidarity Day marches on Washington, in 1981 and 1991.

During this time, a philosophy parallel to solidarity was developed for the *News.* It became increasingly clear that the *News* also would have to seek out stories that provided illustrations and lessons in how the labor movement could grow.

That imperative was clarified by the 1985 landmark report by the AFL-CIO Committee on the Evolution of Work, chaired by Secretary-Treasurer Tom Donahue. "The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions" emphasized the need for innovative organizing techniques, new benefits for union members and new communications efforts, especially through the electronic media.

The *AFL-CIO News* also chronicled one of the most revolutionary changes in the federation, the first contested election in AFL-CIO history, in which President John J. Sweeney defeated Donahue at the 1995 convention.

A study of AFL-CIO communications commissioned by Donahue and presented after the convention recommended that the federation develop new communications vehicles and to reassess the utility of the *AFL-CIO News.* With the debut of the weekly *Work in Progress* in January and the monthly *America@work,* the *AFL-CIO News* now can pass the torch.

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